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Pilon, Janet

Subject: Opposition to Hamilton Municipal Vape Tax

From: Eric HeeSung Yun

Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 9:50 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Opposition to Hamilton Municipal Vape Tax

Dear Mayor Horwath and Councillors,

My name is Eric Yun, and I live in Hamilton and use vaping products. I recently read Item 9.3 from the General Issues Committee Minutes and noticed that the City is exploring the idea of implementing a municipal tax on vaping products. I'm writing to respectfully express my concerns and to ask that you reconsider moving forward with this proposal.

As someone who uses vaping as a tool to stay away from cigarettes, I believe this proposed tax could do more harm than good—for both public health and local businesses.

Vaping Is Already More Heavily Taxed Than Cigarettes

Vaping products in Ontario are currently taxed at a higher rate (182%) than cigarettes (168%), which seems counterintuitive given that vaping is widely acknowledged as a less harmful option for adult smokers. Introducing an additional local tax would further discourage individuals who are attempting to transition to a healthier alternative.

Education Works Better Than Taxation for Youth Prevention

I recognize the concerns surrounding youth vaping, but increasing taxes isn't the most impactful solution. Education has consistently proven to be more effective. In fact, Health Canada recently released new prevention resources that could be implemented in schools and youth initiatives here in Hamilton.

The Stats Being Cited Are Out of Date

Some of the statistics mentioned during the Committee's discussion are outdated. More up-to-date data—such as the Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth published in March 2025—indicates that youth vaping among 12 to 17-year-olds has dropped by more than 40% over the past five years. It's crucial that decisions like this are informed by the most current and reliable information available.

This Tax Could Hurt Local, Responsible Businesses

Vape retailers in Hamilton operate under strict regulations, consistently verify ID, and play a role in supporting the local economy. Imposing a municipal tax could drive customers to shop outside the city or turn to unregulated sources, which lack oversight and contribute nothing to community safety or local revenue.

This Issue Is Already Being Handled Provincially

Vape taxation has already been addressed during Ontario's pre-budget consultations. Introducing an additional municipal tax on top of the existing federal and provincial taxes could create unnecessary confusion and place added strain on local retailers—while also raising questions about how such a tax could be effectively enforced.

In short, I'm worried this tax could unintentionally drive business away, fuel the illicit market, and hurt the very people it's trying to help.

I sincerely hope the City Council will prioritize education and enforcement efforts over introducing new taxes. Thank you for taking the time to listen and for considering input from community members like myself.

Sincerely,

Eric Yun