

From: Office of the Governor Site Support
Sent: 6/6/2015 4:23:29 PM
To: Haley, Nikki
Cc:
Subject: Please Oppose Taxes and Over-Regulation of E-cigarettes in Kansas

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Dennis Thorsby
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June 6, 2015

1205 Pendleton Street
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Dear Governor Haley,

I am writing as a voter and taxpayer urging you to oppose any proposal that would subject vapor products (e-cigarettes) to new and unjustified taxes. E-cigarettes are an incredibly low-risk alternative to smoking, and imposing an extra tax on this potentially life-saving technology would work against the interests of genuine public health and small businesses trying to grow in Kansas.

Subjecting smoke-free vapor products to an extra sin tax and other punitive regulations that are designed to discourage smoking is grossly inappropriate. Changing the law to tax low-risk vapor products will actually create barriers for adults to quit smoking, something that is indefensible from a public health standpoint. Increasing their purchase price will only serve to encourage a half million plus adult smokers in Kansas to continue smoking instead of making the switch to products that are estimated to be 99% less hazardous than cigarettes.

While smoking is widely known to pose significant and potentially devastating health risks, each year only approximately 3% of smokers will successfully quit. Innovative products that further the public health goal of reducing smoking should be promoted. There is overwhelming evidence, ranging from systematic studies to thousands of detailed testimonials (<http://testimonials.casaa.org/testimonials/>), showing that e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products like snus help many smokers quit or reduce their smoking habit, even after they have unsuccessfully tried every other method.

No public hearings have been held on this tax proposal. While such a measure is designed to bring in revenue to the State of Kansas, the end result will likely be less jobs, less tax revenue, and less access to low-risk vapor products, all of which will result in more smokers

deciding not to quit. As a matter of good government, shoving unvetted tax hikes in bills at the very last minute simply is bad policy making.

I along with my fellow members of The Consumer Advocates for Smoke-free Alternatives Association (CASAA) implore you to resist calls for over-regulation and taxation from misguided activists that seek to impede adult access to far less hazardous alternatives to smoking. I look forward to your response on this issue and I am available for any questions you might have.

Sincerely,
Dennis Thorsby