

October 18, 2024

Select Board  
The Finnerty House  
One South Main Street  
P.O. Box 670  
Belchertown, MA 01007

Board of Health  
The Finnerty House  
One South Main Street  
P.O. Box 670  
Belchertown, MA 01007

Dear Members of the Belchertown Select Board and Belchertown Board of Health,

I am writing on behalf of the New England Convenience Store and Energy Marketers Association (NECSEMA) to express our concern regarding the proposed restrictions on nicotine products. This involves the "Nicotine Free Generation" (NFG) regulations to ban the sale of all nicotine products locally and the restrictions on nicotine pouches to adult-only facilities (AOFs). It is imperative that decisions of this magnitude are grounded in data from reputable authorities and that their impact on the future of our communities is fully understood.

We urge you to reject NFG regulations, which is overreaching and undemocratically infringes on the rights of adults over 21. The impact of the regulations will result in harm to local stores, their families, and the local and state economy. The value of businesses with a license to sell nicotine products will be destroyed by this policy. The same will be true if the sale of nicotine pouches is further regulated in your community.

The superfluous restriction of limiting nicotine pouches to AOFs risks negative public health implications. Multiple studies have shown that nicotine pouches are significantly less harmful than cigarettes. The NIH-funded study by David Abrams et al. (2018) emphasizes that cigarettes are the most harmful form of tobacco, whereas nicotine pouches pose "much less harm."<sup>1</sup> The FDA corroborates this by recognizing a "continuum of risk" among tobacco products, placing cigarettes at the highest end and complete cessation at the lowest.<sup>2</sup>

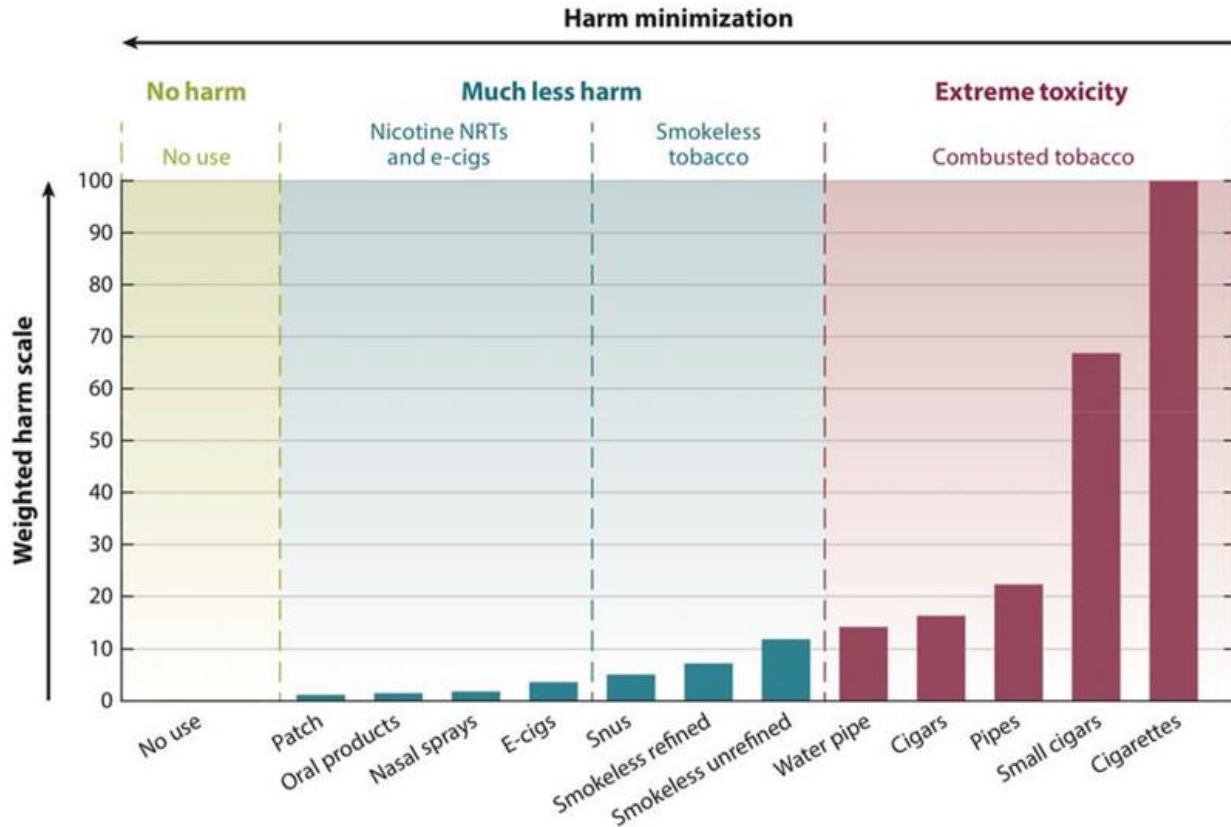
Adult smokers deserve accessible smoke-free alternatives at their usual purchase points. Moving smoke-free products to a limited number of specialty stores, such as vape and head shops, restricts adult smokers' opportunities to discover and transition to these less harmful options. Many adults choose to responsibly use nicotine products. Historically, you have maintained your community with fairness and wisdom, fostering a regulated environment for these adults to obtain nicotine products, a practice that we urge you to continue.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please find resources attached to this letter.

Sincerely,

Peter A. Brennan

## Diagram of Harm Minimization Through Nicotine Products



David Abrams et al. (2018)<sup>1</sup>

### References

1. David Abrams, et al., "Managing nicotine without smoke to save lives now: Evidence for harm minimization." *Prev Med.* 2018 Dec; 117:88-97. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6934253/>
2. FDA, "The Relative Risks of Tobacco Products," <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/health-effects-tobacco-use/relative-risks-tobacco-products>
3. Devi Shastri, "What to know about delta-8 and other common vape shop drugs," *LA Times*, Sept. 8, 2024, <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2024-09-08/what-to-know-about-delta-8-and-other-common-vape-shop-drugs>
4. CBS San Francisco, "Undercover Study: Half Of California Tobacco And Vape Shops Don't ID Teens," <https://www.cbsnews.com/sanfrancisco/news/undercover-study-tobacco-vape-shops-no-id-check-teens>

CC: Steve Williams, Town Manager  
Andrea Crete, Director of Public Health