

Hello, my name is Rick Gilberti, I am the Vice-Chairman of the Bellingham Board of Health and the town's Tobacco Agent. I started smoking at the age of thirteen and I have been smoke free for 23 years now.

Tonight, I will outline Bellingham's regulation for a **Nicotine Free Generation.**

Nicotine Free Generation proposes a definitive, streamlined approach to Tobacco control. Nicotine Free Generation policy prohibits the sale of Nicotine products to anyone born after **January 1, 2004.** Those born before that date may be sold Tobacco products indefinitely. The policy prevents sales to the next generation, phasing out sales slowly over time.

What is Nicotine? The term Nicotine includes all Tobacco and synthetically derived nicotine products such as, Vapes or E-Cigarettes, Cigarettes, Cigars, Chew, and Pouches.

The Problem, Nicotine containing tobacco products remain the single greatest cause of addiction and death in the Commonwealth of

Massachusetts, with over 9000 deaths each year, more than three times of the deaths from the state's opioid crisis. Tobacco kills one-half of its users, accounting for one out of every five deaths in the United States. Despite decades of control efforts, the Tobacco industry continually innovates new products and **Nicotine** delivery methods, undermining regulation and targeting susceptible young adult populations.

Nicotine Free Generation:

It Respects the rights of users: those who already use nicotine products can continue to be sold nicotine indefinitely. Nicotine Free Generation doesn't shame or stigmatize users.

It Considers Retailers needs: Nicotine Free Generation is gradual, providing retailers time to adjust their business model so it does not depend on selling a deadly, addictive product so the market declines gradually each year.

It Is socially reinforcing: Over time, teens and young adults will be further removed in age from those who can be sold Nicotine, decreasing early Nicotine initiation that sparks lifelong addiction.

It Accounts for personal rights and freedoms:

The Massachusetts Supreme Court unanimously upheld the policy in Brookline. As of tonight, 16 communities in Massachusetts have passed this policy. There has been a bill introduced in the Legislature considering this regulation. Hopkinton is the last town to pass this policy. Like Asbestos or lead paint, selling Tobacco is not a constitutional right. The purchase, use, or possession of Tobacco is never criminalized. Tobacco dependence means the loss of free choice and freedom -- almost all Tobacco users wish they'd never started.

It Provides a smooth transition: Nicotine Free Generation avoids black market sales, as current dependent users are never cut off from legal Nicotine access. Additionally, Nicotine Free Generation curtails future demand by preventing the next generation from becoming addicted.

It Comes at the right time and place: Nicotine Free Generation policy is spreading quickly. Massachusetts has led the country in spearheading nicotine policies such as flavor restrictions and minimum sales age of 21. Many

places are meaningfully considering Nicotine Free Generation, including other jurisdictions in the United States and the countries of the United Kingdom, European Union, Malaysia, Singapore, Ireland, Denmark, France, Spain, and Canada.

Opposed strongly by Big Tobacco: Nicotine Free Generation will reduce sales over time, and improve public health.

The Bellingham Board of Health has voted unanimously for this policy and we recommend the passage by this town meeting.

Thank you for your time.