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To: Buzby, Maureen <mbuzby@CityofMelrose.org>

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Sent: Thursday, February 6, 2025 3:26 PM

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Subject: Amherst public hearing

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight.

I'm Maureen Buzby, Tobacco Prevention Program Manager in the Mystic Valley Region. I live in Melrose.

While working on tobacco prevention for the past thirteen years I have gained first-hand experience in how the tobacco industry entices young people to try new, trendy, appealing nicotine products. Almost no young people smoke. That's a good thing. Tobacco control advocates have worked hard for decades to achieve that. Meanwhile the tobacco industry has also been hard at work developing new products that don't look, feel, or smell like cigarettes and cigars.

Ten years ago, e-cigarettes burst onto the scene. Juul captured the lion's share of the market with cool, sleek, discrete vape devices that looked just like a flash drive and came in mango, crème brulee, fruit medley, and other flavors. Juul Labs was sued for deceptive advertising aimed at youth and Massachusetts received \$41 million dollars from the multi-state lawsuit.

Not to worry, many other manufacturers entered the market, Crave being the biggest seller of disposable vapes in this area but there are many more - - Elf Bar, Vuse, Blu, and others. The state acted courageously and passed the first-in-the-nation flavor ban in 2019.

Then along came Zyn. Tiny pouches of nicotine salts dissolved by the saliva in your mouth to provide a quick "nic hit" to the brain. We hear about student weightlifters who pop one or two pouches into their mouths before they lift because it gives them such a buzz. Zyn pouches come in 3, 6 and 9 mg – in each pouch. Compare that to a pack of cigarettes with 20 to 24 mg - - in the entire pack.

More recently other manufacturers have introduced products like Zone, Blue Giant, Golds, Tyson, Zolt, Brixz, and Fre that contain as much as 14, 16, even 18 mg of nicotine in a single pouch. Tins of pouches come with 15 or 20 pouches per tin and many sell for as little as \$5.00 per tin compared to \$14.00 for a pack of Marlboro's. So as much as 270 mg of nicotine for \$5.00 compared to 24 mg for \$14.00. An easy purchase for just about anyone. And with that much nicotine an even higher potential for addiction. That's the goal. The tobacco industry is losing combustible tobacco customers and working hard to get new ones. "Their motto is, "hook them while they are young and you have a customer for life".

Pouches aren't the only product to be concerned about. We now have vapes with an LED screen so you can see how many puffs you have left – just like the range indicator on your car's dash reminding you to fill up. And the newest vapes come with video games. Yes, play Mario Bros while you vape.

What's next? Tobacco companies are in their labs right now cooking up the next generation of addictive nicotine. They have billions in profits which they invest in research and marketing and they can mount robust opposition to tobacco advocates who have been working tirelessly for decades to ensure that nicotine does not continue to kill hundreds of thousands of Americans every year. The death toll is staggering but so are the health care costs that result from smoking-related disease.

Six of my communities decided to protect youth by adopting this forward-thinking public health policy that we call NFG.

I encourage you to consider this policy which will start us on the path to end nicotine addiction. End youth use of poisonous products that cause so much harm all in the name of corporate profit.

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