

# END THE SALE OF FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS

**LD 1215** will protect public health and the environment.

## **Flavored tobacco products threaten our communities and pollute waterways and wildlife.**

- Flavored tobacco products attract and hook kids, leading to nicotine addiction, disordered brain development, illness, and premature death.
- Disposable e-cigarettes, which are designed entirely for one-time use, are non-recyclable hazardous waste. They have skyrocketed in popularity, with a 1000% increase in use among high school students between 2019 and 2020. According to the 2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, 1 in 6 Maine high school students are currently using a tobacco product.
- The tobacco industry has used flavored tobacco for decades to target vulnerable and marginalized communities, including children, people of color, LGBTQ+, women, people with mental and behavioral health disorders, and low-income and homeless people. Systemic disparities mean these populations also tend to live near where waste from these products ends up, compounding the harm.

## **Flavored tobacco products contribute to air, land, and soil pollution.**

- A 2022 WHO report documenting the tobacco industry's environmental damage notes carbon emissions equivalent to one-fifth of the airline industry's annual emissions as well as plastic pollution.
- Cigarette filters, which contain microplastics, are the second-highest form of plastic pollution worldwide and the most frequently littered item in the United States and, according to data from Friends of Casco Bay, the largest source of beach trash in Cumberland County. In practice, they do not biodegrade.
- E-cigarettes introduce plastic, nicotine salts, heavy metals, lead, mercury, and flammable lithium-ion batteries into the environment. Because they do not biodegrade even under severe conditions, these microplastics and chemicals pollute waterways and wildlife.
- Although the lithium-ion batteries powering e-cigarettes are theoretically reusable, five disposable vapes are being thrown away every second in the U.S. Over a year, this amounts to 150 million devices – which together contain enough lithium for about 6,000 Teslas.



Image: Parents Against Vaping E-cigarettes

## **Ending the sale of flavored tobacco products will reduce youth addiction and environmental waste.**

- Taking flavored tobacco products that are designed to appeal to kids off the market will reduce youth tobacco use and protect Maine's young people from a lifetime of nicotine addiction.
- Ending the sale of flavored tobacco products will lead to a decrease in a major source of toxic waste in the environment: chemicals, microplastics, and heavy metals from tobacco products.
- LD 1215 was passed by the Senate last year and is on the House calendar.

**Support LD 1215. Protect Maine People and Communities by Ending the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.**

For more information, please contact

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## Environmental Priorities Coalition

Maine's **Environmental Priorities Coalition** is an inclusive statewide alliance of 34 conservation, climate action, and public health organizations. Each year we collectively identify a slate of policy priorities to act on the climate crisis, further environmental justice, protect land, water, and wildlife, and cultivate healthy Maine communities.

We are counting on Maine policymakers to protect the extraordinary environment so all people and communities in Maine can thrive.



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APPALACHIAN MTN CLUB



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