

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

My name is Jon Decker, and I am a senior fellow at the Parkview Institute. I wanted to write today to express my support for Rhode Island House Bill 5770.

Politicians and public health officials now have a rare opportunity to help reduce smoking-related deaths due to the growing availability of reduced-risk electronic nicotine delivery systems. HB 5770 takes the right approach by ensuring that these should not be subject to the same taxation as traditional cigarettes.

Reducing taxes on modified risk tobacco products would send the correct message to the public that these are less harmful alternatives. This incentivizes consumers to shift their preference away from combustible cigarettes by ensuring it is less expensive for those who wish to quit to do so.

Rhode Island residents will benefit from this common-sense approach to regulating nicotine products. However, perhaps even more, they will benefit as the bill promotes a tax structure that would encourage harm reduction rather than simply generating revenue at the expense of Rhode Island's private sector.

I urge the House Finance Committee to support this evidence-based and scientific approach. Doing so would prioritize public health while fostering competition in a competitive and expanding marketplace, encouraging the development of more product options that have the potential to reduce harm to consumers.

We must adopt this approach so that this market will continue to thrive.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope you will support HB 5770.

Sincerely,

Jon Decker
Senior Fellow
Parkview Institute