



ND Petroleum Marketers Association
ND Retail Association



Testimony- SB 2189

January 19, 2021- Senate Finance and Tax Committee

Madam Chair Bell and Members of the Senate Finance and Tax Committee:

For the record, I'm Mike Rud, President of the North Dakota Petroleum Marketers Association. On behalf of NDPMA and the well over 600 retail store fronts this association proudly represents, I stand before you urging a **“DO NOT PASS” recommendation on SB 2189.**

NDPMA stands before you offering several more amendments. NDPMA offers these amendments because it believes this is once again another misguided effort to punish retailers for trying to do the right thing. Let me explain further.

Retailers completely agree with the bill sponsor. We do not want young kids in this state using tobacco products. Several sessions ago, we worked with the Breathe ND group to move all vaping products behind the counter and take down all floor displays. We agreed it was the right thing to do to help our youth. If you talk with retailers today, most will tell you they lost a lot of sales to legal aged customers because of the new regulations. But they all would agree they don't want to be part of the problem, They would rather work towards a solution. Today, most retailers our association represents will tell you between the vaping products being hidden behind the counter and the federal legal of age purchase law changing to 21 in 2019, sales of vaping products are very slow.

Quadrupling licensing fees and extending burdensome reporting requirements will only fuel more division. The problem doesn't lie with convenience stores. It lies in other areas, like internet sales and other dark markets. Why put regulations in place to further hamper retailers? I think the answers lie with implementing T21 at the federal and state levels and developing a similar matching agreement with Federal internet laws at the state level as SB 2190 will do.

The amendments brought here before you today are designed to stop the problems we are all concerned about. Youth and Tobacco. Let's do the right thing and find some common ground here. Our members are doing everything asked of them to help the cause, don't penalize them.