



May 13, 2020

The Honorable John Eklund
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
Ohio Senate
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Senator Eklund,

Please accept this letter of support for Senate Bill 308 (SB 308). The Ohio Vapor Trade Association (OHVTA) represents vapor stores, vapor manufacturers and others in the vapor industry in Ohio. As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, OHVTA instructed all vapor stores to close per Governor Mike DeWine's closing of non-essential businesses.

As the retail businesses in Ohio began to reopen yesterday, OHVTA member stores are going above and beyond Governor DeWine's *Responsible Restart Ohio* plan. In addition to social distancing, increased cleaning and other prescribed measures, many of our members have also installed sneeze guards, discontinuing sampling and discouraging vaping by customers in the store. Additionally, OHVTA has encouraged all stores to limit occupancy at five people at less at any given time.

However, like nearly all small businesses across Ohio and the county, the vapor industry has been hit very hard from the shuttering of stores in response to the pandemic. Many of our member stores were not in a position to keep employees on the payroll and our owners have suffered greatly. Many are one frivolous lawsuit away from losing their store.

Again, OHVTA members will be taking many measures to help combat the spread of coronavirus in our stores and we pray that none of our customers contract the virus by any means. However, should a customer contract the virus, a financial responsibility should not fall on retail businesses that have gone above and beyond trying to protect customers.

The protections included in SB 308 will help ensure that retail store owners won't face additional financial hardships that have been brought by this virus.

I thank you and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

James Jarvis

James Jarvis
President