



Attachment # 2

*Letter from Medical Health Officer,  
Population & Public Health, Fraser  
Health Authority,  
dated October 7, 2025*

October 7, 2025

**Mayor and Council**

City of New Westminster  
511 Royal Avenue  
New Westminster, BC V3L 1H9

Dear Mayor Johnstone and Councillors,

I am writing to share my support for the City of New Westminster's staff recommendation to amend the Zoning Bylaw that would prohibit new age-restricted vape retail stores from opening in new locations. I would like to thank the City of New Westminster staff for consulting myself and the Population Public Health team in the development process of their recommendation and for giving me the opportunity to include my letter of support in their recommendation package.

Vaping prevalence among youth continues to be a public health concern. According to the 2023 McCreary Adolescent Health Survey, **one in five youth** in the Fraser North region (New Westminster, Burnaby, Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, Tri-cities) have used vapour products. Of the youth who have tried vaping, over half (54%) had vaped in the last 30 days.<sup>1</sup> Nicotine use among youth is of particular concern due to its potential effects on brain development and the risk of developing nicotine dependence.<sup>2,3,4</sup> The short-term health impacts of vaping can include coughing, wheezing, increased heart rate, shortness of breath, throat and mouth irritation, nausea, vomiting and chest pain.<sup>2,5</sup> Further research is needed to determine the long-term health risks of vaping, particularly the potential impact on developing cancer, respiratory, cardiovascular and other diseases.<sup>2</sup> Nicotine is a highly addictive substance. The tobacco and nicotine industry has promoted vaping devices as accessible and effective smoking cessation tools. However, vaping devices are not approved by Health Canada as a smoking cessation tool.<sup>6</sup> Research shows that youth are using these products recreationally rather than to quit smoking, contributing to higher rates of nicotine dependency.<sup>7,8</sup> Even more concerning, studies have shown that youth who vaped were more likely to smoke cigarettes in adulthood.<sup>9</sup>

Consistent with the evidence associated with tobacco use and retail density, emerging evidence suggests that density of retail vape outlets influences youth use of vapour products.<sup>10,11</sup> Areas with high concentrations of vape retailers see increased rates of vaping in adolescents, who are particularly influenced by availability and environmental factors like marketing and advertising.<sup>10,12</sup> A 2022 report found that three-quarters of BC youth aged 16-19 years old who vaped in the past 30 days, purchased their e-cigarettes from a vape store in the last 12 months.<sup>13</sup> As per the B.C.

E-Substances Regulation, all flavoured products including menthol/mint, can only be sold in age-restricted stores.<sup>14</sup> A 2024 study indicated that 80% of Canadian youth aged 16-19 years old selected fruit flavoured vapes, 14% opted for menthol, and 8% for confectionary flavours.<sup>15</sup>

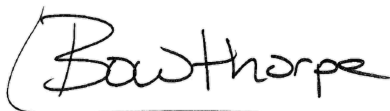
Fraser Health enforcement data in 2025 to date suggests that age-restricted\* vape shops in New Westminster have had more enforcement violations than all-ages stores.† In New Westminster this year to date, 50% of the age-restricted stores that were inspected had at least one documented violation; of all-ages stores, approximately 10% did. In New Westminster this year so far, 60% of the total documented violations involving sales to minors have been in age-restricted stores and 100% of the total documented promotional‡ and display§ violations were in age-restricted stores. Note that Fraser Health prioritizes inspecting stores that may be more likely to have significant violations, such as past compliance.

To date, several municipalities have passed and implemented new bylaws or amendments limiting retailer density. The Township of Langley, the City of Maple Ridge and the City of West Vancouver have successfully implemented zoning bylaws to restrict the number of age-restricted vape retailers permitted, comparable to the City of New Westminster's staff recommendations.

I recommend limiting the number of age-restricted vape retailers to prevent youth use of vapour products. By implementing zoning regulations recommended by staff to limit age-restricted vape retailers, the city can manage the density and accessibility of age-restricted vape shops, reducing youth exposure and the associated health risks of vaping and nicotine use.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this recommendation. The Population Public Health team would be happy to assist wherever possible moving forward. Additional support could include recommendations to further manage signage and advertising of vapour products, sharing further insights from our enforcement data and collaborating on enforcement issues.

Sincerely,



**Lindsay Bowthorpe, MD, CCFP, MPH, FRCPC**  
**Medical Health Officer – Medical Director**  
**Population and Public Health, Fraser Health Authority**  
*Pronouns: she/her*

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\* An age-restricted vape shop is any retailer that sells flavoured vapour products and are not allowed to have minors in the store.

† An all-ages store is a retailer that does not sell flavoured vapour products and include convenience stores, gas stations, drug stores, supermarkets, restaurants, news stands, department stores and casinos.

‡ Promotional violation occurs when vapour products are promoted in a manner that is visible or audible to minors.

§ Display violation occurs when vapour products are visible to minors.

## References

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