



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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June 5, 2020

Marikae Toye, Co-Chair, Illegal Tobacco Task Force
Massachusetts Department of Revenue
General Counsel's Office, Criminal Investigations Bureau
100 Cambridge St., 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

RE: Implementation and Enforcement of *An Act modernizing tobacco control*

Dear Attorney Toye and other Members of the Illegal Tobacco Task Force:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on implementation and enforcement of Chapter 133 of the Acts of 2019, *An Act modernizing tobacco control*.

For the first time in years, the number of Massachusetts' residents using tobacco products is rising, fueled by the tobacco industry's targeting of our youth with addictive, flavored products. I sponsored *An Act modernizing tobacco control* to limit access to all flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes. Combined with a renewed commitment to cessation efforts, the new law will protect all people, particularly the young, from the harmful impacts of tobacco products and the risk of nicotine addiction.

In the wake of COVID-19, we have seen how a compromised respiratory system can impact the survival of an individual. It has become abundantly clear that decreasing the availability of tobacco products through effective enforcement of the new law will have both short- and long-term positive impacts on the public health of our Commonwealth.

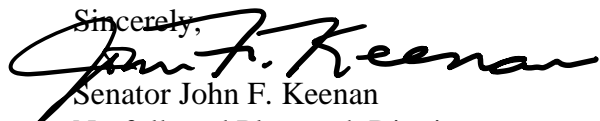
To match the goal of this new law, please know that I support the Governor's proposed expansion of the scope of the Task Force, set forth in Sections 53 and 54 of the Governor's FY 21 budget proposal, and that I will advocate as well for additional warehouse space and the funding necessary for the Task Force to meet its increased obligations.

Given its expertise and past work, I am confident that with additional resources the Task Force will be able to detect and address the issues that may arise with the implementation of the new tobacco control law. I look forward to working with you on these efforts.

While it will be some time before we are able to accurately measure the impact of Chapter 133, I have no doubt that in combination with strong enforcement and a continued focus on education and cessation programs, tobacco and nicotine use patterns will return to their downward trends, resulting in improved public health.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments, and please let me know if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,



Senator John F. Keenan
Norfolk and Plymouth District

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