

**Testimony Opposing HB 1596**  
**Submitted by Zeno Corrigan**  
**On Behalf of Haffner's, a Division of Energy North Group**  
**Date: Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

To the Members of the New Hampshire Joint Committee on Revenue,

My name is Zeno Corrigan and I represent Haffner's, a part of Energy North Group which serves dozens of retail communities across the great state of New Hampshire. Today, I am **opposing House Bill 1596**, which proposes raising the tobacco tax.

New Hampshire's competitive advantage has long been its lower tobacco tax compared to neighboring states (e.g., Maine at \$3.50 per pack, Massachusetts at \$3.51 per pack). HB 1596 proposes a 57% increase—from \$1.78 to \$2.80 per pack—which would significantly erode this advantage. This change will not only discourage out-of-state consumers from purchasing in New Hampshire but also drive in-state residents out to shop across the border.

Foot traffic along border-stores doesn't just generate tobacco sales; it supports a wide range of ancillary purchases such as fuel, food, snacks, beverages, and lottery tickets. When cigarette taxes rise sharply, foot traffic declines as consumers seek cheaper alternatives in neighboring states or through illicit channels. This shift reduces overall store profitability, harms legitimate businesses, and fosters a massive uptick in criminal activity. Ultimately, law-abiding retailers lose out significantly while illegal smugglers thrive, depriving the state of tax revenue and undermining compliance efforts—the opposite of what this bill intends to achieve.

The ripple effect of this tax hike will extend far beyond tobacco, damaging retail profitability and undermining compliance efforts. Rather than achieving its goals, this bill will weaken local economies, harm law-abiding retailers, and create opportunities for illegal operators.

It is for these reasons that we urge the committee to reject House Bill 1596.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Zeno Corrigan

Haffner's / Energy North Group

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