



November 12, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Energy Marketers of America (EMA) and our members who operate thousands of fueling stations and convenience stores across the country, I want to commend your Administration for taking decisive to crackdown on smoke shops selling illegal products and restore integrity and fairness to the retail marketplace while protecting American families and youth from dangerous, unregulated products.

Across the country, law-abiding convenience and fueling-station owners are watching these smoke shops move in next door. Unfortunately, these operators are ignoring every law that legitimate retailers are required to follow. Many don't check IDs, don't pay taxes, and put dangerous, untested products in the hands of kids.

For years, these unlawful operations flourished with little consequence. Now, thanks to your leadership, the tide is turning. The all-of-government crackdown led by the Food and Drug Administration, Customs and Border Protection, and the Department of Justice is restoring integrity to the marketplace and protecting public health.

The results speak for themselves. This fall, HHS and CBP announced the largest-ever seizure of illegal e-cigarettes -4.7 million units valued at \$86.5 million - almost all of them from China. Earlier in the year, the FDA and CBP confiscated nearly \$34 million in unauthorized vapes during a Chicago operation. In New York, Governor Hochul's *Operation Vapers' Dozen* led to dozens of arrests against distributors shipping illicit flavored vapes statewide.

In other states, similar actions have dismantled major criminal networks. In Louisiana, *Operation Vape Out* resulted in ten arrests and more than \$1 million in product seizures. In Florida, *Operation Smoke Signals* arrested 27 individuals across 20 stores for selling vapes and psilocybin to minors. In North Carolina, *Operation Smoke and Mirrors* shut down 13 smoke shops tied to narcotics and trafficking rings. Even local police, like those in Orange County, California, have seized hundreds of pounds of drugs and contraband tobacco from shops posing as legitimate retailers.

This crackdown isn't about politics. It's about fairness and safety and protecting the thousands of law-abiding retailers who should not have to compete with these illegal sales. Illicit vape imports have become big business for foreign manufacturers and a nightmare for local retailers. Almost all of these contraband products originate in China, marketed in candy flavors and bright packaging designed to appeal to kids. Meanwhile, responsible convenience stores train employees to verify age, pay every tax, and sell products that comply with state and federal law.

Your administration's decisive, coordinated enforcement has restored confidence for these legitimate operators. Seizing millions of illicit vapes and shutting down unlawful smoke shops sends a clear message: the era of consequence-free profiteering is over.

We urge you to keep going. Sustained progress will require continued coordination and resources for state and local law enforcement, who see these unlawful smoke shops every day. A portion of federal enforcement funds should flow directly to local agencies to investigate, seize, and prosecute offenders.

Honest retailers across America, a community of family-run, community-based small businesses, want nothing more than a level playing field. Every time a smoke shop acting illegally is shut down, those legitimate businesses gain a little more of the fairness they deserve.

The bottom line is that strict enforcement protects consumers, safeguards kids, and ensures that those who follow the law can thrive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Underwood", enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Rob Underwood
President
Energy Marketers of America