

## **Testimony In Support Of Senate Bill 6447**

**Bob Ramstad**

**Seattle Pipe Club Political Liaison**

Madame Chair and members of the committee, I am Bob Ramstad from Ballard. I am the political liaison for the Seattle Pipe Club and I support Senate Bill 6447.

### **Legislation Past**

- In the not too distant past, Washington law was quite different
- Tobacco shipments required age verification by the carrier
- This was very similar to other laws around the country
- Court actions in Maine made it clear that this approach was unworkable

### **Legislation Current**

- SSB 5340 was passed last session and is in effect today
- It replaced the Maine style law and is relatively straightforward
- As a result, it is very comprehensive
- Effectively, the law is a complete ban on shipments of tobacco products to residents
- One notable exception is that of cigars, which may be ordered by mail

### **Legislation Proposed**

- The inability to mail order pipe tobacco is a hardship
- Pipes and cigars have a very similar profile in many ways
- They also share a history of similar legislation
- Our goal was a simple, short, and appropriate modification
- Adding pipe tobacco to the list of exemptions is clean
- This bill will allow us to enjoy our hobby as before

### **Commerce & Labor**

- Economics and demographics both work against pipe tobacco
- Pipe tobacco overall is a tiny segment of the industry
- Demand for quality pipe tobacco is very limited as well
- Tobacconists in Washington State are few and have been disappearing fast
- Most are not interested in quality pipe tobacco due to limited demand and short shelf life
- Those who do carry pipe tobacco are forbidden to mail tobacco even to long standing customers
- Local mail delivery is fast, and leverages established relationships with customers
- Pipe smokers that live in rural areas are therefore extremely upset with the status quo
- Some pipe smokers will be forced to purchase less expensive lower quality blends locally
- The status quo most likely results in net revenue loss to the state
- The loss is pronounced if more Washington State tobacconists go out of business

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