

Painters Mill Wine and Spirits

9960 Reisterstown Road

Garrison, MD 21117

February 4, 2020

RE: HB 3/SB 233- Business Regulation - Flavored Tobacco Products - Prohibition

Dear Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

I am writing today to ask you to oppose HB3/SB233 entitled "Business Regulation - Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition" As a small business owner in Baltimore, along with my fellow business owners and, more broadly, my fellow citizens of Maryland will suffer from the bill's passage.

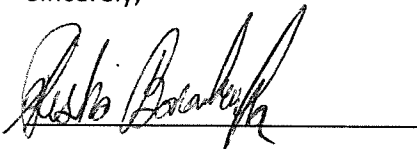
My firm is a family owned and operated retail store and this flavored tobacco ban could prove to be disastrous to small retailers like me, as well as my employees and our communities, with potentially little to no evident public health benefit. We understand addressing the flavoring of vape products to address illegal youth usage, but youth cigarette usage is at historic lows.

On top of the other effects on my business, the increased number of contraband sales would make my neighborhood less safe as it is associated with rises in other kinds of criminal behavior, not to mention increased confrontations between these dealers and law enforcement. The increased contraband sales would raise the number of cigarettes distributed by illicit dealers who don't abide by legal restrictions or regulations, or the voluntary We Card initiative, as my business and numerous others successfully do. Such sales could undermine the years of progress made in reducing underage access to tobacco products in our communities.

I can assure you that my business will remain on the front lines of efforts to keep tobacco products out of the hands of our youth – but that is not possible if an abrupt menthol ban puts me and other retailers like me out of business and opens the door for the unregulated sale of these products.

I respectfully ask that you oppose this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rishi Baradwha", is written over a horizontal line.

Rishi Baradwha

Partner, Painters Mill Wine and Spirits