

Law Office of T. Ryan Wilson, LLC

8403 Colesville Road, Suite 1100
Silver Spring, MD 20910

www.ryanwilsonlaw.com
240-638-2721
trw@ryanwilsonlaw.com

The Honorable William C. Smith
Chairman
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 13, 2020

Dear Chairman Smith:

I am writing to express my opposition to SB 233, entitled Business Regulation – Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition. If nothing else, I would ask that the bill be amended to exempt pipe tobacco.

As drafted, the bill will outlaw nearly all, if not all, pipe tobacco. All pipe tobacco has either a topping or casing of some sort of flavor, such as vanilla, cocoa, fruit essence, maple, etc. Pipe tobacco falls broadly in two categories: non-aromatic pipe tobacco, which relies on different varieties of tobacco for its flavor; and aromatic pipe tobacco, which relies on added flavorings such as vanilla, chocolate, or fruit essences. The vast majority of pipe tobacco sold in the United States is aromatic, so under the bill, the majority of pipe tobacco would be illegal in Maryland.

I am a pipe smoker. I smoke English blends, some Virginia blends, burley blends, as well as aromatic and cross-over blends. A cross-over blend would be an English blend, which is a tobacco blend that contains Latakia tobacco, and an aromatic component, usually vanilla. I also smoke some aromatic blends. I'm also a regular at my gym and a guy who takes the stairs to the fifth floor of the parking garage where I park at work.

The bill fundamentally misunderstands the purpose of aromatic tobacco. Unlike vape fluid, aromatic pipe tobacco doesn't necessarily taste quite like what it smells like. The flavoring adds more to what pipe smokers call room note than they do to the flavor of the tobacco. Take a look at the reviews of aromatic tobaccos on tobaccoreviews.com, and you will see aromatic tobaccos rated on whether they taste at all like what they smell like.

Aromatic pipe tobacco is not like the liquid in a vaping device. They're not just getting kid-friendly flavors, and they're certainly not trying to lure underage smokers. The average briar pipe costs around \$100, and most regular pipe smokers own more than 20 pipes. I own more than 200. Aromatic pipe tobacco gives adult pipe smokers options. Plus, aromatic blends give a better room note the nonsmokers in the family.

Pipes are not the same as cigarettes. Pipe smokers don't inhale the smoke into their lungs, and their life expectancy is not dissimilar to that of nonsmokers. Unlike menthol cigarettes, aromatic pipe tobacco really is as much for others as it is for pipe smokers, themselves.

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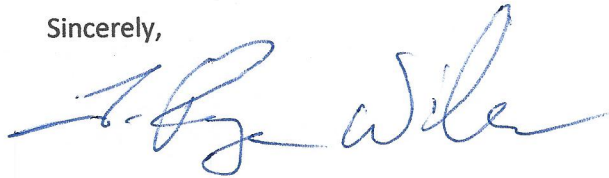
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As a general rule, aromatic pipe tobacco has a lower nicotine content than most nonaromatic tobacco. Ironically, then, with respect to pipe tobacco, this bill will force pipe smokers to use stronger tobacco, meaning tobacco with a higher nicotine content.

Again, I urge an unfavorable report on the bill. At the very least, the bill should not apply to pipe tobacco. I would be happy to work with the committee and committee counsel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Ryan Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

T. Ryan Wilson