

March 26, 2024

Dear Senator King,

As both a Maryland resident and a small business owner, I am writing to express my opposition and grave concern regarding S.B. 1056, which would ban the sale of vapor products from convenience stores, like ours, while giving adult-only facilities, like vape shops, exclusive rights to sell these products. My businesses, RRMR LLC and RRK LLC, own and operate a Shell gas station and Exxon Mobil gas station, each with its own convenience store in the state of Maryland. We have a long history of compliance selling age-restricted products, including tobacco and alcohol to adults 21 and older in Maryland. Vape shops, on the other hand, have only emerged in the past several years, and are much less experienced working within an age-restricted, licensed distribution system. It makes no sense to limit the sale of vapor products to stores with the least experience selling age-restricted products. By limiting vapor sales in only some stores, S.B. 1056 would create a significant inconvenience to adult vapers across the state. This could cost the state significant tax revenue from reduced sales each year.

Moreover, banning these products would undermine our ability to operate by significantly impacting our store's revenue. Adult customers who purchase vapor products also buy gas, food, and other items that our store depends on. Our business and businesses like ours add to the economy in Maryland. We are licensed, employ members of the community, and have a long history of compliance preventing underage tobacco sales.

I strongly believe that S.B. 1056 is not in the best interest of small businesses, the state of Maryland, or its constituents. Please oppose S.B. 1056 and protect our store's ability to sell vapor products to adults 21 and older.

Thank you for considering my sincere concerns on this issue.

Ramani Weeramunda

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