



March 26, 2024

**RE: SB 1056 Cigarettes, Other Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices - Revisions (Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024)**

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members

My name is Julian (Blackie) Wills and I am the President and CEO for Dash In Convenience Stores, a Maryland-based company with 40 outlets in the state employing about 800 between these outlets. We are owned by The Wills Group, Inc., a Maryland-based company founded over 98 years ago and I am part of the fourth generation of family leadership for the organization. We have community-based values and donate over \$1 million annually to our charitable partners including various food banks.

I am writing in opposition of Senate Bill 1056 / House Bill 1130 for the following reasons:

- Adult users of these products consider them a safer alternative to cigarettes.
- No other state has established a monopoly for vape shops to sell these products.
- Prohibiting these products for sale by licensed Tobacco/Other Tobacco Product retailers will result in further proliferation of these tobacco and vape shops in communities.
- The convenience store industry has worked with the state's Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission on campaigns to ensure these products do not fall into the hands of minors.
- Dash In has 100% 'We Card' program regardless of age of the consumer. Dash In also scans all driver's licenses in our point-of-sale system to ensure the identification cards are valid.
- Banning Electronic Smoking Devices in convenience stores will lead to an increase in the illegal market of these products.
- Tobacco/Other Tobacco Product retailers like convenience stores are highly regulated and are better suited to ensure age-compliance on the purchase of these products.
- Stiffer penalties (fines and revoked licenses) would be a better solution to penalize the bad actors who sell these products to minors.

Thank you for your time and please advise of any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julian Wills III".

Julian (Blackie) Wills III  
CEO & President  
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