

March 1, 2024

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby and members of the Economic Matters Committee,

My name is Kyle Feldman, and I am the Executive Vice President of Government Affairs for Century Distributors, located in Rockville, Maryland. We employ over 200 Marylanders and distribute over 10,000 products to more than 500 retail customers across the state. As a long-standing business in Maryland, I urge you to support HB 1197, a bill that would create a comprehensive vapor product directory and strengthen enforcement measures against the growing problem of illicit disposable vapor products.

HB 1197 is crucial for several reasons:

A state vapor directory would help clarify which vapor products are authorized for sale, enabling both wholesalers and retailers to easily confirm the legality of each item before selling it. Currently, there is significant confusion for many regarding the sale of vapor products, which is evident with the hundreds of illicit disposable products being sold across Maryland today. Despite this, FDA enforcement on these products continues to be sluggish. The state of Maryland already maintains a directory for cigarettes that are lawful for sale, so creating a similar system for vapor products is a very logical and necessary step.

The current lack of federal oversight and enforcement of vapor products puts Maryland consumers at risk and also creates a competitive disadvantage for law-abiding corporate citizens. Not only will HB 1197 create a vapor product directory, but it will also allocate funds for strong enforcement measures. This ensures compliance among distributors and retailers and guarantees consumer access to approved products. A structured, regulated, and secure market will promote the long-term viability of a product category that may be significantly less harmful than traditional combustible cigarettes.

I strongly urge your support for HB 1197. It will create an equal playing field, provide industry members with the necessary information, fund enforcement efforts, and protect Maryland consumers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kyle Feldman  
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