



March 1, 2024

Dear Maryland Economic Matters Committee members,

President

Jeff Allen
National Convenience
Distributors
Farmingdale, NY

**Vice President/
Comptroller**

Barry Margolis
Cooper-Booth
Wholesale
Mountville, PA

Vice President

Mike Kelley
Core-Mark
Gardiner, ME

**Vice President/
Secretary**

Kyle Feldman
National Convenience
Distributors
Farmingdale, NY

Executive Director

VJ Mayor, CAE
NEWA Office
Portland, ME

My name is VJ Mayor. I am a Laurel resident and serve as Executive Director of the Northeast Wholesalers Association. Our association was founded to represent wholesale distributors in the northeast who are facing common challenges. Our association encompasses Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Maryland.

Many of our members are family-owned multi-generational businesses that have supported their local communities for decades.

Today, I am here to voice our association's support of HB 1197. We believe that a directory is a step in the right direction. Maryland lawmakers have an opportunity to enact legislation that cleans up the illicit e-vapor market by enacting a directory of legal products as illicit sales have grown to over 50% of the e-vapor marketplace.

This solution will improve how these products are distributed and sold, and will strengthen other elements of tobacco regulation that help move us forward with reducing underage use while also providing adult smokers access to less harmful smoke-free alternatives.

Delegate Roger's HB 1197 contains an appropriate list of products. HB 1197 is very close to what Louisiana enacted in 2023 and has proven successful.

The association supports HB 1197.

Sincerely,

VJ Mayor, CAE