

My name is Rafiq Lakhani, I manage and run Fenton Street Station which is a gas station/convenience in Silver Spring, Maryland. I have managed Fenton Street Station for 12 years, and I have 10 employees running my location.

I oppose SB 1056. My store is in the heart of Silver Spring, most of my clients live in the area. I run a small convenience store. By taking away electronic cigarettes away from my business, it is going to cause a lot of inconvenience for my customers. As far as I know, there aren't any vape/smoke shops in my area for my customers to go to buy their electronic cigarettes, if this bill goes through. Granted, I don't sell a lot of electronic smoking devices compared to a huge chain convenience store, but I have certain customers who come looking for these products from time to time at my store. Not only do my electronic cigarette customers come to buy their electronic cigarettes, they buy other items as well in my store like chips and soda, and I'll lose that revenue as well. I live off of small margins, and every item sold counts.

Also, We Card every customer who buys tobacco at our store. We're responsible retailers, and we train employees to look out for fake IDs as well. Please do not ban these items in our stores, we're already suffering from high inflation, fewer customers coming into our store, and high hourly payroll cost per employee.

Regards,

Rafiq Lakhani