



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

Senate Bill 1056

*Cigarettes, Other Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices – Revisions
(Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024)*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Finance Committee

Date: March 7, 2024

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 1056 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill is focused on combatting the adverse health effects of tobacco and other related products in communities. Specific to counties, it increases the licensing fee to sell these products and the number of inspections that must be done annually to ensure compliance with standards for providing these products in a retail setting.

Counties have hundreds of locations selling these products in their jurisdictions, while concurrently undertaking substantial efforts, both financial and operational, to remediate the negative effects these products have on the health of residents, particularly children. Law enforcement agencies, schools, and local health departments bear the brunt of this task, and their efforts are limited by the necessary funding to provide services. These programs include prevention education, smoking cessation resources, classes, social and traditional media campaigns, and the like. Counties appreciate the funding that would be allocated to local governments to aid in these remediation initiatives, but would recommend a larger portion of the new fine allocated to local governments who are doing this work.

The bill as written sends \$100 of the \$300 license fee to county governments, which is a portion that lacks an appreciation for the financial burden counties incur purely as a result of the licensing. Counties would increase the share of that fee sent to the local governments to supplement their existing remediation efforts. Additionally, counties believe the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission should be tasked with the full responsibility of performing inspections, rather than delegating these duties to county governments.

SB 1056 takes a number of important steps to fight dependence on tobacco and electronic cigarettes for community members suffering the consequences of these products. Counties appreciate that, and the recognition of our efforts, and believe these amendments will help local governments achieve the full intent of the bill. For these reasons, counties urge a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on SB 1056.