



Testimony Senate Bill 842
Senate Finance Committee
February 25, 2025
Support

Chair Beidle, Vice-Chair Hayes and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Senate Bill 842 – Other Tobacco Products and Electronic Smoking Devices – Seizure Requirements sponsored by Chair Beidle. The American Lung Association supports this bill as it would give the Alcohol Tobacco and Cannabis Commission the authority to seize other tobacco products including electronic smoking devices.

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education and advocacy. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to improve the air we breathe; to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families; and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases.

In the recent release of the American Lung Association’s [State of Tobacco Control](#), it was noted that the funding for Maryland’s Tobacco Control and Prevention program at approximately \$23 million is (inclusive of approximately \$1.7 million of federal CDC funds) woefully lower than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) recommended level of \$48 million, at 47.9%. The Lung Association strongly support protecting and increasing this funding especially considering the high levels of youth use of electronic smoking devices and the need to develop educational programs and outreach to prevent youth from initiating tobacco use and encourage current smokers to quit and not switch.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, killing an estimated 490,000 Americans and [7,500 Marylanders](#) each year.¹ The American Lung Association supports funding of evidence-based tobacco prevention, education and cessation programs. These programs should focus their efforts on the populations most disproportionately impacted by tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure.

In data from the [2024 National Tobacco Youth Survey](#), tobacco use among high school and middle school students continue to show at high levels with more than 2.25 million youth using a tobacco product. The report also shows that 1.63 million youth are still vaping, and over 25% are vaping daily which indicates a very high addiction rate. In [Maryland](#), 23% of high school students use an electronic smoking device. Nearly 90% of the youth survey respondents reported using flavored e-cigarettes including mint and menthol. Flavored tobacco products remain the primary gateway for youth addiction. The tobacco industry has continued to target youth users with marketing of flavored tobacco products which makes them appealing to youth, with many of them not realizing that these products contain nicotine. We are continuing to see an onslaught of new products enter the market, such as nicotine pouches which come in flavors designed to attract youth. As a result, we are setting our kids up for a lifetime of addiction and losing the opportunity for the first tobacco-free generation.

During the 2024 session, the General Assembly passed House Bill 1180/Senate Bill 1056, the Tobacco Retail License Modernization Act of 2024 which made important changes to the way tobacco products are sold in Maryland, including requiring annual compliance checks of retailers. An important part of these compliance checks are the ability to seize products which are not legal to be sold in Maryland. Currently, the ATCC has the authority to seize cigarettes however they do not have the authority to seize other tobacco products including electronic smoking devices and liquids. Senate Bill 842 gives the ATCC the authority to seize all tobacco products that are illegal to be sold in Maryland. The Lung Association believes this authority is an integral piece in the enforcement of tobacco laws in Maryland.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the health and wellbeing of the residents of Maryland, we urge you to support Senate Bill 842 and encourage a favorable report from committee.

Sincerely,



Aleks Casper
American Lung Association
Director of Advocacy, Maryland
202-719-2810
aleks.casper@lung.org

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Eliminating Tobacco-Related Disease and Death: Addressing Disparities—A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2024.