

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 1142

(Delegate Barve, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Criminal Law - Bidi Cigarettes - Minors

This bill prohibits a flavored tobacco-based product known as a bidi cigarette from being sold to or possessed by a minor.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal reduction in State sales tax revenues. Applicable penalty provisions related to the sale or possession of tobacco products by a minor would not materially affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: Applicable penalty provisions related to the sale of or possession of tobacco products by a minor are not expected to materially affect local finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Bidi cigarettes are not included in the definition of tobacco products prohibited to be sold to or possessed by a minor.

Background: Bidi cigarettes are small, hand-rolled, tobacco-filled, flavored cigarettes that are manufactured in India. They are sold in many convenience stores, gas stations, and smoke shops. The U.S. Attorney General reports that bidi cigarettes contain more than three times the nicotine and five times the tar of a regular cigarette.

Bidi cigarettes are not currently regulated by either the federal or the State government. As a result, the packs seldom have the warning labels found on other tobacco products. In Maryland, bidi cigarettes are subject to the sales and use tax, but are not subject to the tobacco tax because they are not regulated as a tobacco product.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Bills dealing with the sale of bidi cigarettes (HB 1210 and HB 1219) were introduced in the 2000 session. HB 1219 received an unfavorable report from the House Judiciary Committee. No action was taken on HB 1210.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Comptroller of the Treasury (Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Division), Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader – March 3, 2001
ncs/jr

Analysis by: Michael Sanelli

Direct Inquiries to:
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510