

# Premium Cigar Retailers of Maryland On Senate Bill 177 and House Bill 134



The Premium Cigar Retailers of Maryland (PCRM) is a not-for-profit trade association representing 30 premium cigar and pipe tobacco specialty stores in Maryland. Our bricks-and-mortar members are family-owned small businesses that employ an average of 6-7 people from the local community. Hand-crafted premium cigars account for 80% of all PCA members' sales.

## PCRM MEMBERS OPERATE ADULT-ONLY ESTABLISHMENTS

Premium cigar and pipe tobacco specialty stores are adult-only businesses run by professional tobacconists. Premium cigars and pipe tobacco are not available for sale in convenience stores or other non-specialty stores accessible by youth because they are highly perishable, requiring special care in a controlled humidified environment by a professional tobacconist.

## THE PROBLEM

Broad language in both SB 177 and HB 134 extends far beyond banning tobacco products that are being marketed to and used by youth. With vast room for interpretation, SB 177 and HB 134 also extends to premium cigars and pipe tobacco which are sold in adult-only specialty stores. For many retailers, mass market tobacco sales are incidental to their businesses, but premium cigar and pipe tobacco specialty stores cannot make up lost revenue from a tobacco sales ban by selling food, milk, or gasoline.

## THE SOLUTION

Amend SB 177/HB 134 to remove premium cigars and pipe tobacco from the scope of the legislation because they are sold at age restricted premium cigar and pipe tobacco specialty stores.

## FLAVORS

Much like coffee or fine wines and spirits, premium cigars and pipe tobacco are luxury products described with tasting notes even though they may not contain flavor additives as demonstrated by this Cigar Aficionado review: "Every last leaf in this blend is Nicaraguan and every puff is an overture of flavors that's at times heavy and rich with notes of dark chocolate and wood, and other times, subtle and understated with hints of fine caramel and toasted almonds. In musical terms, the word for this box-pressed torpedo would be dynamic."

## PRECEDENT

Massachusetts is the only state in which a flavored tobacco ban that extends beyond vapor products is in effect. In 2019, the Commonwealth recognized that unique, adult-only purveyors of premium tobacco products are different than other tobacco retailers. Premium cigar and pipe tobacco specialty stores were excluded from the Massachusetts flavor ban.

## DATA

Analyzed data in the Analyzed data in the National Institute of Health and the Food and Drug Administration's PATH Study is specific to premium cigars —often other studies lump premium cigars with products like cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or non-premium cigars that are machine made, have flavor additives, and are sold in C-stores. The data collected in this study demonstrates that:



The average age of an individual's first premium cigar is **30 years old** – compared to 16.7 years old for cigarettes.

**1.2**

The average **premium cigar consumer smokes 1.2 days out of every 30** --compared to 29.6 days out of 30 for cigarette smokers.



There is no meaningful correlation between premium cigars and cigarette smoking.