



WMDA/CAR Service Station
and Automotive Repair Association

February 10, 2021

Chairman: Dereck E. Davis
Members of Economics Matters Committee

RE: HB 134 Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition

Position: In Opposition

Banning flavored tobacco products including electronic smoking devises will have unintended consequences to adult and youth purchasing tobacco products, on taxes received and the financial health of retailers that are on a razors edge now.

Flavored menthol tobacco products average about 58% in our member sales statewide and more in some areas. The age to buy tobacco products is 21. Will this ban keep adult smokers from buying their favorite tobacco? It will stop legal sales in Maryland, but not DE,VA,WV where tobacco is cheaper and not far away. Maryland retailers would not only lose tobacco sales, but also gas and ancillary items purchased in store.

Black markets exist now and with a flavor ban they would explode. Crime associated with illegal sales will also. The underage will have more locations to buy their product where they do no age verification. Maryland retailer check I.D.

Fiscal note is 100% under estimating effects and that is if HB732 veto is not overridden – would add loss of additional \$1.75 tax a pack and making fiscal note almost 200% off.

The best way to protect Maryland youth, collect taxes, and keep retailers in business along with thousands of employees, is to recognize Maryland is not an island. As well intended as this bill is it creates more opportunity for illegal activity, is costly and inconvenient for adult smokers who will be travel to neighboring states or just buy off the street.

Please give HB134 an unfavorable Report

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