

Date: January 24, 2021

Written Testimony to oppose Menthol and Flavor Ban Bill (HB 134)

I, Mansoor Anvari, of Highland Maryland, affirm that all statements in this testimony are accurate.

I am an owner and partner in 11 convenience retail stores in Maryland, all located in Central Maryland (Howard, Montgomery, Prince Georges, Frederick counties). Together at these stores, we employ more than 100 people.

Needless to say, the proposed ban of menthol tobacco products will severely damage our businesses, leading to crippling financial hardship for us. The result would be closure of some of our stores and layoffs of many of our staff. The wider community of customers that our stores currently serve would face decreased choices, higher prices and less convenience.

There is a long history in our country of products being banned, only for that market to move to illicit and illegal channels, resulting in extraordinarily harmful consequences to our society. Whether it is the alcohol prohibition era of 1920s or the more recent cannabis ban being slowly overturned, the damage to society has been immeasurable and long-lasting.

A better approach for our government would be smartly legislate the distribution and sale of menthol tobacco products. We urge you to reconsider this ban and partner with us to enforce the already-available regulations to prevent abuse such as minimum age-restrictions, constraints on quantities, robust licensing, and partner in developing public educational programs regarding responsible tobacco use.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mansoor Anvari', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mansoor Anvari

Spring Ridge Exxon  
Landoverhills Exxon  
Airpark BP  
Jessup BP  
Shell Foodmart  
Johns Hopkins Exxon  
Lyndwood Exxon  
Waterloo Exxon  
Columbia Liberty  
Gude Drive Liberty  
Olney Exxon