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**House Bill 134**

Maryland Legislators,

I am writing in opposition to House Bill 134 to ban flavor on all tobacco products in the state of Maryland. A ban on flavored and menthol tobacco products will not only negatively impact the economy and businesses in Maryland but will also have negative effects on local communities.

Tobacco sales, and specifically menthol cigarette sales, make up more than 50% of sales for convenience store businesses. HB 134 would put business owners and their employees at risk, especially as they struggle to maintain operations throughout the pandemic.

This ban on flavored and menthol tobacco products also increases the likelihood of illicit sales, especially to minors. Voting in favor of HB 134 provides more opportunity for sales in an unregulated market as neighboring states are still able to sell these tobacco products and will be selling them at a much lower prices.

I urge you to carefully research those states throughout the country that have implemented a ban like HB 134 – while sales may seem to have decreased in the state itself, sales in neighboring states have increased.

Vote no on HB 134.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Elena Chan*