



WMDA/CAR Service Station
and Automotive Repair Association

January 26, 2021

Chairman: Delores G. Kelley
Members of Senate Finance Committee

RE: SB177 Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition

Position: In Opposition

Banning flavored tobacco products including electronic smoking devices will have unintended consequences to adult and youth purchasing tobacco products, on taxes received and the financial health of retailers that are on a razor's 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.

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 inconvenient for adult smokers and hurts retailer.

Please give SB177 an unfavorable Report

WMDA/CAR is a trade association that has represented service stations, convenience stores and independent repair shops since 1937. Any questions can be addressed to Kirk McCauley, 301-775-0221 or kmccauley@wmدا.net