

Katrina Cooper

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SB 177

Oppose Maryland Tobacco Flavor Ban

Dear Maryland Legislators,

I would like to submit my opposition to the proposed bill 177. Not only is it unfair to specifically target certain adult tobacco customers, it is a huge financial loss for so many people. More than 6,360 licensed Maryland businesses sell tobacco products to adults 21 and older. This bill is proposing taking away nearly 56% of the cigarette category, 60% of smokeless tobacco and 41% of cigars. Banning these products would jeopardize the jobs of store employees, store owners, sales reps and more.

It will also result in a significant loss in revenue for the State of Maryland. In a time when state governments are so strained already, why would you want to eliminate known income for the state?

And let's be clear, consumers of flavored tobacco products, including menthol, will more than likely simply travel to another state to make their purchases. I live in Allegany County, where residents can get to PA or WV in under 15 minutes. I will not quit smoking my Menthol cigarettes, I will simply go to WV and give them my taxed money.

This ban will also increase the risk of an expanding Black Market. We have seen it before and we know it causes costly problems for our communities. These law enforcement organizations don't need a new surge in criminal activity to deal with, the costs are too great already.

Is a flavor ban on all tobacco really what is best during the toughest year this state has ever faced?

Thank you for your time and please vote no to SB177.

Katrina Cooper