



WMDA/CAR Service Station and Automotive Repair Association

Chairperson: Delores G. Kelley
Members of Senate Finance Committee

RE: SB 249 – Baltimore City – Local Laws Authorization -Tobacco, OTP and ESD

In opposition

Last week a similar bill SB 99 came up in this committee. Majority of proponents sited youth tobacco, OTP and ESD use and the need to control it. This bill does just the opposite.

As you know tobacco age is 21 by Maryland and Federal law. Our member tobacco retailer in cooperation with organizations like “We Card” are dedicated to Age verification and protecting our youth. Baltimore City has the authorization now to enforce age verification, invoke heavy fines, and license suspension for those that do not comply.

This bill has no reason, if not to stiffen Tobacco and OTP regulations. Illegal sales of Packs, cartons, OTP and ESD are on the streets of Baltimore now with next to zero enforcement. Enhanced restrictions, Higher Age, Ban on Flavors, or outright prohibition would be a blessing to the Illegal Market. Too much money involved for gangs not to become involved, and they will recruit youth to sell, just like drugs, except more money and little enforcement.

Unlike these gangsters our member location within the city of Baltimore that sell tobacco, OTP, and ESD products are dedicated to checking ID and collecting taxes for the state. Tobacco, OTP, and ESD are high percentage of store sales and ancillary sales of other products when customers come in to purchase tobacco. Businesses are struggling to recover from the last 2 years. Let us not push them over the edge.

This bill would only enhance and expand the illegal market that exist now, while giving underage, and adults more options that could put them in harm’s way. While enhancing Illegal market , it has the potential to close businesses and take tax revenue away from the state that could be used for educational purposes for the young.

Tobacco regulations belong to this legislative body, not the council of a county or a city.

Please give SB249 an unfavorable report

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