



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 3, 2022

Senator Delores G. Kelley
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SENATE BILL 249- CIGARETTES, OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS, AND ELECTRONIC SMOKING DEVICES- LOCAL LAW AUTHORIZATION- UNFAVORABLE -

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,
Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 99. My name is Shelby Kemp, and I am a Marketing Manager for Royal Farms Convenience Stores. We are a 3rd generation family-owned Maryland based business with our headquarters located in Baltimore. We proudly operate 167 stores and employ 3,167 employees in the state of Maryland.

We have 27 stores in Baltimore City. Royal Farms is committed to serving the people in Baltimore. While many companies prefer the suburbs, Royal Farms has always served Baltimore City. Our headquarters are in the City of Baltimore. Royal Farms pays significant real estate property taxes. Its employees pay substantial income taxes. We employ hundreds of workers in Baltimore.

Cigarettes and other tobacco products make up a significant percentage of sales in our stores. If SB 249 were to pass, revenues in our stores would substantially decrease, and we would be forced to lay off workers. From a state policy perspective, I seriously doubt banning tobacco products would stop or even reduce smoking. People who smoke would simply find another market to smoke.

This type of legislation does simply does not work. On a macro level, the state of Massachusetts banned all flavored tobacco in 2019. The state banned flavored tobacco with the intent and hope that flavored tobacco consumption would decrease. The problem was that most of the banned item's sales just moved over to neighboring Rhode Island and New Hampshire. There is now legislation in Massachusetts to repeal this legislation and bring the tax revenue back to their state.

On behalf of Royal Farms, we respectfully request an unfavorable report.

Shelby Kemp
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