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SB 0259

February 16, 2023

TO: Members of the Finance Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: Senate Bill 259 – Business Regulation - Flavored Tobacco Products - Prohibition
POSITION: Support

Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 259.

SB259 aims to prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products in the state of Maryland. This bill will play a crucial role in protecting the health and well-being of our youth. Flavored tobacco products, such as flavored e-cigarettes and cigars, are marketed specifically towards young people. The use of these products has skyrocketed in recent years, with a significant portion of youth and young adults becoming regular users.¹ A government study found that 81% of youth who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product, and most tobacco users start young.² This is a cause for great concern, as flavored tobacco products contain harmful chemicals that can have long-term health effects, such as nicotine addiction, respiratory problems, and even cancer.³

Moreover, the availability of these flavored products makes it easier for young people to start using tobacco, as they are drawn in by the appealing flavors and misleading advertisements.⁴ This puts them at a higher risk of developing a lifelong addiction and suffering the associated health problems. E-cigarettes almost always contain nicotine, an addictive drug that can harm adolescent brain development and affect young peoples' learning, memory and attention.³

By enacting this bill, Maryland will take a bold step towards protecting our youth from the dangers of flavored tobacco products. This bill will make it harder for young people to access these products, reducing the number of new users and saving countless lives. Passing SB 259 will send a strong message that the health and well-being of our youth is a top priority.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 259.

¹ Wang, T. W., Gentzke, A. S., Creamer, M. R., Cullen, K. A., Holder-Hayes, E., Sawdey, M. D., Anic, G. M., Portnoy, D. B., Hu, S., Homa, D. M., Jamal, A., & Neff, L. J. (2019). Tobacco Product Use and Associated Factors Among Middle and High School Students - United States, 2019. Morbidity and mortality weekly report. Surveillance summaries (Washington, D.C.: 2002), 68(12), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.ss6812a1>

² Ambrose, B. K., Day, H. R., Rostron, B., Conway, K. P., Borek, N., Hyland, A., & Villanti, A. C. (2015). Flavored Tobacco Product Use Among US Youth Aged 12-17 Years, 2013-2014. JAMA, 314(17), 1871–1873. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2015.13802>

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2023). Know the Risks – E-Cigarettes and Young People. Retrieved from <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/knowtherisks.html>

⁴ Pepper JK, Ribisl KM, Brewer NT. (2016). Adolescents' interest in trying flavoured e-cigarettes. Tobacco Control; 25:ii62-ii66.