

Melissa Hendrix

114 Tennessee Rd

Stevensville, MD 21666

Thank you, chair, and committee members for allowing me to speak today. I am here to oppose HB1414 as this bill would hurt my business and my customers. Currently I pay 12% tax on the products I sell in my shop which is well over 70% of the products that I sell. This tax imposed would hurt my customers and lead them either back to cigarettes, black market, or other states. I have been able to help many customers not only get off traditional cigarettes but also worked them off the vapes, such as my mother, father, and husband plus many others.

Nicotine is a hard substance to get off and using ENDS products has helped many people lower the amount of nicotine that they use daily. This would hurt my small business because many people would find it hard to continue to pay those prices as we already have a higher tax than alcohol or cannabis which are both at 9% tax.

I have had the opportunity to speak with many customers about this bill and how they thought, and they were not happy putting a strain yet again on their pockets when everything else is going up. Some of the comments were these products have helped them get off traditional cigarettes, helped them lead healthier lives, and healthier lives for those around them. They can have more active lives because they can breathe better, which makes them feel better. Imposing this tax will just hurt in so many directions from small businesses, customers, and even the state of Maryland. Customers will find other means if necessary.