

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

My name is Meadow Skipper, and I am an employee of Vape Jungle, a small business dedicated to providing adult consumers with access to regulated, safer alternatives to traditional tobacco products. I am writing today in strong opposition to HB 1441, a bill that, while framed as consumer protection, ultimately serves the interests of Big Tobacco at the expense of Maryland's small businesses, adult consumers, and public health.

Concerns About HB 1441

HB 1441 grants the Attorney General exclusive power to determine which vapor products can be sold in Maryland. However, the bill does not provide clear guidelines or criteria for how these decisions will be made. This lack of transparency raises serious concerns about fairness, consistency, and potential bias in product approvals. The costly fees associated with product registration would also disproportionately favor large corporations while shutting out small businesses like ours.

Risk of Product Bans & Public Health Consequences

One of the most alarming aspects of HB 1441 is the high likelihood that it will ban open-system vapor products, which are widely used by adult consumers seeking low-nicotine alternatives to cigarettes. This would leave only high-nicotine, pre-filled products—primarily sold in convenience stores—as the remaining options. Ironically, these are the very products most often linked to underage use, as data consistently shows that youth obtain vaping products from gas stations and convenience stores, not specialized vape shops.

By eliminating open-system products, the bill would also drive adult consumers toward either unregulated online websites or back to cigarettes—both of which are far greater threats to public health.

Economic Impact on Small Businesses & the State

The economic consequences of HB 1441 cannot be overstated. Small vape shops across Maryland would be forced to close, leaving only large corporate retailers to dominate the market. This would not only eliminate jobs but also deprive the state of significant tax revenue. Estimates suggest that the financial losses resulting from similar legislation in other states have exceeded \$100 million. Additionally, the bill would encourage consumers to seek products from unregulated online sources or neighboring states, further diminishing Maryland's control over product safety and taxation.

A More Balanced Approach

If the goal of HB 1441 is truly to protect consumers, then a more balanced approach is necessary—one that includes transparent product approval processes, fair regulatory costs for

small businesses, and a focus on keeping vapor products out of the hands of minors without eliminating responsible adult access.

I urge you to reconsider this legislation and work toward a solution that does not hand the vaping industry over to Big Tobacco while pushing small businesses and consumers into the shadows. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
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