

**Hearing In The Maryland House Of Delegates
Economic Matters Committee
Set for February 25, 2025**

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TESTIMONY ON HBI44I

UNFAVORABLE

Electronic Smoking Devices Manufacturers - Certifications

TO: Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Economic Matters Committee

My name is Scott Webber, resident of Montgomery County, Maryland, and Co-Founder of the Vaping Awareness Public Education Society, submitting this testimony in OPPOSITION to HBI44I for two primary reasons.

The VAPESociety is strongly in favor policies that clarify, limit, and reduce tobacco smoking locally, nationally, and globally because medical science and all available statistics reveal smoking to still be the single largest contributor to preventable death in the US and Maryland, [7500+] and the most costly. [>\$3 Billion] [See attached]

However, it is equally just as true that vaping remains the single most effective solution to help smokers reduce and quit cigarette smoking, and that ANY effort to impede or reduce the transition from smoking to ANYTHING else, is contrary to the public health and wellbeing. Any person who does not understand this concept, ie: Harm Reduction, and its public benefit, and how it forms the very foundation of vaping, clearly does not understand the industry, or the population.

The conflation of 'smoking' and 'vaping' as being the same – or even similar – and treating them similarly, is wrong, both in physical science, and in their relative harms and costs.

HBI44I is yet another bill being pushed by Big Tobacco – across all 50 states and internationally – to overwhelm smaller actors in the vaping sphere out of existence, not only

giving the vaping space only to the large tobacco companies, but pushing vapers back into the cigarette smoking arena, when smoking becomes a less costly and more easily accessible option.

But more importantly, shutting down the vaping industry in Maryland will COST the State TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS in lost sales tax, excise tax, and all the related business taxes collected now by vape shops put out of business – which is the clear intent of the bill.

10 minutes away from the testimony ‘closing bell’, and there is still no Fiscal Note. When it does come out, please pay close attention to the ‘Small Business Impact’, but also look for the loss is revenue that would result if 50-75% of small business vape shops are forced out of business. The total ESD taxes collected over the past 5 years by the Commission will give this Committee a fairly good idea of how much lost revenue can be anticipated by this very short-sighted legislation.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an UNFAVORABLE report on HBI441.

Most Sincerely,
~Scott Webber

The Toll of Tobacco in Maryland

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High school students who smoke	3.2% (10,200)
High school students who use e-cigarettes	14.3%
Male high school students who smoke cigars (female use much lower)	4.5%
Kids (under 18) who try cigarettes for the first time each year	8,100
Adults in Maryland who smoke	9.1% (438,400)

Deaths in Maryland from Smoking

Adults who die each year from their own smoking	7,500
Proportion of cancer deaths in Maryland attributable to smoking	26.0%

Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined — and thousands more die from other tobacco-related causes — such as fires caused by smoking (more than 1,000 deaths/year nationwide) and smokeless tobacco use.

Smoking-Caused Monetary Costs in Maryland

Annual health care costs in Maryland directly caused by smoking	\$3.14 billion
Medicaid costs caused by smoking in Maryland	\$619.7 million
Residents' state & federal tax burden from smoking-caused government expenditures	\$838 per household

Smoking-caused productivity losses in Maryland	\$6.4 billion
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Amounts do not include health costs caused by exposure to secondhand smoke, smoking-caused fires, or use of non-cigarette tobacco products. Productivity losses are from smoking-caused premature death and illness that prevent people from working. Tobacco use also imposes costs such as damage to property.

Tobacco Industry Influence in Maryland

Annual tobacco industry marketing expenditures nationwide	\$8.6 billion
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Estimated portion spent for Maryland marketing each year	\$95.4 million
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Published research studies have found that kids are twice as sensitive to tobacco advertising as adults and are more likely to be influenced to smoke by cigarette marketing than by peer pressure. One-third of underage experimentation with smoking is attributable to tobacco company advertising.

[View sources of information.](#)

More detailed fact sheets on tobacco's toll in each state are available by emailing factsheets@tobaccofreekids.org

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