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Senator Pam Beidle

Finance Committee, Chairman

3 East Miller Senate Office Building

11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

February 25, 2025

**Re: Testimony on SB 0842 (HB 1241) - *Other Tobacco Products and Electronic Smoking Devices- Seizure and Wholesaler Licensure Requirements***

**Position: Favorable**

**Subject: Protecting Vulnerable Communities – Support SB 0842**

Dear Chairman Beidle,

As a faith leader and community advocate in Baltimore City, I am writing to urge your support for SB 0842. I am the lead administrator at Masjid Ul Haqq - Baltimore (MUHB). Outside of my role at MUHB, my work focuses on improving health and equity in underserved communities, where the impact of youth tobacco use is particularly severe. I support this bill because it will help protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

Thank you Chairwoman Beidle, Delegate Amprey and Chairman Wilson, for your leadership in sponsoring this legislation.

Tobacco companies have long targeted low-income and minority communities with aggressive marketing tactics. As a result, youth in these areas are disproportionately affected by tobacco use, leading to higher rates of addiction and long-term health complications.

Maryland already spends **\$3.14 billion** annually on tobacco-related healthcare costs, and too many of our young people are being funneled into a cycle of addiction that is difficult to break. We must take a stand against Big Tobacco's predatory tactics.

SB 0842 is a necessary measure to strengthen enforcement against illegal e-cigarette sales and regulate these products like other tobacco items. This legislation is critical to protecting Maryland's youth—especially those in at-risk communities.

With **81% of Maryland voters** supporting action against Big Tobacco, I urge you to vote in favor of SB 0842.

Thank you for considering this vital issue.

Sincerely,

*Moses Hammett*

Moses Hammett

MUHB Board Member, Community Advocate & Faith Leader