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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

My name is Nabeehah Azeez and I am writing to you as a community worker in Central West Baltimore in support of SB 0842. SB 0842 (HB 1241) is legislation that aims to grant the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission the same seizure powers over e-cigarettes that it already has over other tobacco products like cigarettes, to standardize the Commission's oversight and enforcement authority across the tobacco market. The legislation also brings e-cigarettes in line with regulations for other tobacco products, notably by requiring record keeping for the sale of e-cigarettes. These steps are crucial for ensuring the same healthcare and public health strategies and enforcement that protect Maryland's youth from traditional tobacco products are also available for e-cigarettes. **I urge you to pass an amendment free bill, without the type of regulatory loopholes Big Tobacco has exploited for decades.**

Flavored e-cigarettes, like traditional tobacco products, lure kids into a life-long struggle with deadly addiction. This is done under the guise of a safer, cleaner or less harmful product. Unfortunately e-cigarettes are not safe, they are bad for your heart and lungs, and they are just as addictive as traditional cigarettes. Most importantly, flavored e-cigarettes are causing a new generation to get hooked on nicotine!

I currently serve on the board of the Masjid Ul Haqq - Baltimore an Islamic faith institution that has been rooted in the Upton community for nearly 70 years. I am also a small business owner. Most importantly, I serve my community through my employment and my volunteer service which allows me to see the devastation of tobacco products on a daily basis. It is not uncommon to see young people, who are not old enough to buy cigarettes on their own, hooked on electronic tobacco and vape products. Despite efforts to reduce tobacco use, **over 48,000 Maryland high school students** report using tobacco products, particularly e-cigarettes. This is why it is critical that we ensure that existing legislation is expanded to include e-cigarettes.

With **81% of Maryland voters** in support of stronger tobacco laws, now is the time to act. **I urge you to pass SB 0842 (HB 1241) for the health of our children and our communities.**

Sincerely,

Nabeehah Azeez

Nabeehah Azeez,

MUHB Board Member, Community Worker & Muslim Woman