



Tree House Project, Inc.

Senator Pam Beidle
Finance Committee, Chairman
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

February 21, 2025

RE: SB 842 - Other Tobacco Products and Electronic Smoking Devices - Seizure and Wholesaler Licensure Requirements

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairwoman Beidle,

I am writing to you as a youth organizer, student, and peer mentor living in Baltimore, to express my support for SB842, and thank you for your leadership in sponsoring this bill. I support this bill because as a community leader and mentor to young women, I believe it is essential to protect their rights and secure their future. Young women deserve every opportunity to grow and thrive in a safe and healthy environment. I am committed to advocating for policies that safeguard their well-being and limit their exposure to harmful influences. This bill is a necessary step in ensuring that young women have the support and protections they need to make empowered choices for their future.

Despite progress in tobacco control, the problem of youth access to tobacco products, particularly e-cigarettes, remains significant. Data indicates that over 48,000 Maryland high school students self-report that they use tobacco products, a number that likely falls short of the true total. The marketing strategies and new products like flavored e-cigarettes target and hook kids, Big Tobacco's next generation of customers.

The impact of youth tobacco use is both a public health and economic burden. Maryland incurs annual healthcare costs of approximately \$3.14 billion directly related to smoking, and 27.5% cancer-related Maryland deaths can be traced to tobacco use. We must act now to mitigate its influence on the health our children and our communities at large.

As you know, SB842 proposes 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 make uniform the Commission's oversight and enforcement authority across the tobacco market. The legislation also brings



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e-cigarettes in line with regulations for other tobacco products, notably by requiring records 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 products like cigarettes are also available for e-cigarettes.

The need for this legislation is broadly recognized. In 2024, polling showed eighty-one percent of Maryland voters supported action against Big Tobacco to safeguard our children. I urge your committee to vote in favor of SB 842, and continue your strong track record of protecting our children from the dangers of tobacco.

Thank you for your consideration and for taking a stand with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MS' or 'MSE', written in a cursive style.

Monique Shelton-EI

Peer Mentor