



***Mission:** To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy **Vision:** Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities*

HB 477 Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices—Local Law Authorization

Hearing Date: March 2, 2022

Committee: Economic Matters

Position: SUPPORT

Chairman Wilson and members of the Economic Matters Committee: The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) would like to express support for HB 477, sponsored by Delegate Fennell. This bill will give authority back to local communities to enhance provisions that regulate the sale and distribution of cigarettes, other tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices.

Healthy families, a clean environment, and good jobs are goals that we all strive for here in Maryland. Allowing local communities to create greater protections against tobacco for their neighborhoods or certain more vulnerable populations is a way to keep moving towards those goals. Good ideas are often grown locally, such as no smoking, child bike helmet, and paid sick leave laws, which all started locally here in Maryland and made their way to the state level.

Research shows that Americans trust local governments more than state or federal entities, making the local authority the more sensible place to enhance targeted population protections. This eliminates the need for a state or federal policymaker to make assumptions about what all communities need with a wide brush. There are certain protective provisions that are absolutely needed at a state level, but this should not preclude local policymakers from listening to their community and acting accordingly.

This bill is not creating a new system or suggesting a new structure to Maryland policy. This bill seeks to restore power back into the hands of our local communities to protect the good welfare and values of their own residents surrounding tobacco and other smoking devices. The state should support communities that want to pass laws enhancing health and safety, not position itself to interfere. We urge a favorable report on HB 99.

The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We support public policies consistent with our vision of healthy Marylanders living in healthy, equitable, communities. MdPHA is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a nearly 145-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing the health disparities that plague our state and our nation.