



**HB 477 – Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices – Local Authorization
OPPOSED**

March 2, 2022

Honorable C.T. Wilson
Chair
Economic Matters
House Office Building, Room 231
Annapolis, MD 21224

Chair Wilson, Vice-Chair Crosby, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Vapor Alliance represents approximately 200 brick-and-mortar vapor shops across Maryland. We are small businesses and defined in statute as vape shop vendors meaning 70% or more of our retail sales are derived from vapor products and accessories such as hardware and liquids. For almost all of our shops, this number is closer to 90% - 100%.

We have helped thousands of Maryland tobacco users transition to electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) through the use of “open systems” that allow the user to control the amount of nicotine intake. This allows the adult user to decrease their nicotine intake over time.

The last four years, the Maryland Vapor Alliance has opposed numerous flavor ban bills in the Maryland General Assembly that, if passed, would eliminate access for consumers that have used the products our members sell to quit combustible cigarettes. This legislation would give the full authority to local jurisdictions to implement laws that are at least as stringent as Maryland law. This means each county could pass local laws that increases taxation of ENDS or ban flavored products. Our products are sold in fewer than 200 shops in Maryland and cannot be purchased on the internet. If a local jurisdiction passed such laws, these businesses would fail. The state would lose tax revenue and consumers would be stuck with combustible cigarettes or high nicotine closed system electronic smoking devices, often the equivalent of a pack of cigarettes.

We remain committed to working with the legislature on crafting legislation to strengthen the regulations around vaping products. We thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

Matt Milby
Vice-President, Maryland Vapor Alliance