

January 2020 Newsletter

Hello everyone, we hope this new year has been good to you so far. We are optimistic this year will be better than previous years and wish you success & prosperity.

It will be difficult to stay optimistic within the vaping community due to the rhetoric and falsehoods that continue to plague our industry. However, we are working fervently to keep it alive and we need your support and involvement.

Local update/news

As you know, we are active members of the Maryland Vapor Alliance (MVA) which fights for the vape industry through advocacy. If you've been keeping up with our newsletters, you will remember that vaping in Maryland is now on the chopping block. In our last newsletter we discussed 3 bills, proposed in the General Assembly, that eliminate vaping altogether. Since then more bills have been introduced and at this point, we need all hands-on deck to tell legislators not to abolish our adult products.

We are asking for your involvement. One idea, put into action last week, is the *Postcard Campaign*. All MVA member stores are asking all vapers to fill out a postcard which will be photocopied and given to their respective legislators. On the card, we ask that you write a few sentences that sum up your vape testimony – how/why you came to vape, flavors matter to adults, high taxes and flavor bans close stores, and therefore you may return to cigarettes.

Another avenue to get involved is come to the hearings and testify in person or in writing. Written testimonials should include your personal story and the immediate impact vaping has made in your life and the lives of family, friends, and others. If citing medical and/or scientific items, please state only facts and attach the data to your testimony. Spoken testimony will be a summary of your written testimony. Speakers are given no more than 3 minutes and therefore we recommend pointing out the highlights. Be sure to include the bill's impact if passed.

We need as many people in attendance to show support for vaping. If you are uncomfortable speaking or writing your testimony, we are more than willing to help. Even if you do not submit testimony, PLEASE come to the hearings and support our right to vape!!!

Here are the bills that have been introduced to date:

[House Bill 3 \(HB3\)](#)

Sponsor: [Derek Davis](#) (D) Prince George's County – Chair of Economic Matters Committee

House Committee: [Economic Matters Committee](#)

Bill Title: Business Regulation – Flavored Tobacco Products Prohibition

Bill Synopsis: prohibit manufacture, ship, import, or sell into or within the State of Maryland any flavored tobacco & vape products

Hearing Date: Thursday, Feb 6 @ 1pm

Vape Chalet stance: Oppose

[House Bill 400 \(HB400\)](#)

Sponsor 1: [Joseline Pena-Melnyk](#) (D) Anne Arundel County & Prince George's County

Sponsor 2: [Erek Barron](#) (D) Prince George's County

House Committee: [Ways & Means](#)

Bill Title: Tax – General – Vaping Product Tax

Bill Synopsis: Vape Tax of 30%, allows counties to add additional tax, individuals must show proof the tax was paid, taxes will go to the General Fund

Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 11 @ 1pm

Vape Chalet stance: Oppose

[House Bill 732 \(HB732\)](#)

Sponsor 1: [Eric Luedtke](#) (D) Montgomery County

Sponsor 2: [Joseline Pena-Melnyk](#) (D) Anne Arundel County & Prince George's County

House Committee: [Ways & Means](#)

Bill Title: Electronic Smoking Devices, other tobacco products & cigarettes – Taxation & Regulation

Bill Synopsis: Vape Tax of 86%, seizure of products that tax was not paid, first violation is \$150 for EACH package or device, subsequent violation(s) is \$300 AND imprisonment not exceeding 2 years

Hearing Date: TBD

Vape Chalet stance: Oppose

[Senate Bill 3 \(SB3\)](#)

Sponsor: [Cory McCray](#) (D) Baltimore City

Senate Committee: [Budget & Taxation Committee](#)

Bill Title: Taxation & Regulation – Electronic smoking devices, other tobacco products, & cigarettes

Bill Synopsis: change current cigarette tax from 30% to 86% AND add the same 86% tax to vaping products

Hearing Date: Wednesday, January 29 @ 1pm

Vape Chalet stance: Oppose

[Senate Bill 54 \(SB54\)](#)

Sponsor 1: [Delores Kelley](#) (D) Baltimore County – Chair of [Finance Committee](#)

Sponsor 2: [Clarence Lam](#) (D) Baltimore & Howard Counties

Senate Committee: [Finance](#)

Bill Title: Electronic Smoking Devices – Adding flavoring – prohibition of shipping, import, or sale

Bill Synopsis: prohibiting any shipping, importing, or selling into or within the State of Maryland a flavored electronic smoking device other than tobacco

Hearing Date: **Thursday, February 13 @ 1pm**

Vape Chalet stance: Oppose

[Senate Bill 233 \(SB233\)](#)

Sponsor: [Malcom Augustine](#) (D) Prince George's County

Senate Committee: [Finance](#)

Bill Title: Business Regulation – Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition

Bill Synopsis: certain licenses do not allow manufacturing, importing, selling a flavored product with the smell or taste of other than tobacco or menthol into or within the State of Maryland

Hearing Date: **Thursday, February 13 @ 1pm**

Vape Chalet stance: Oppose

[Senate Bill 410 \(SB410\)](#)

Sponsor 1: [Benjamin Kramer](#) (D) Montgomery County

Sponsor 2: [Jim Rosapepe](#) (D) Prince George's County & Montgomery County

Senate Committee: [Finance](#)

Bill Title: Electronic Smoking Devices – Flavor Prohibition

Bill Synopsis: Prohibits the sale of electronic smoking devices containing natural and/or artificial flavors other than tobacco. Violators subject to a \$1,000 fine and/or 30 days imprisonment

Hearing Date: **Thursday, February 13 @ 1pm**

Vape Chalet stance: Oppose

[Senate Bill 440 \(SB440\)](#)

Sponsor 1: [Antonio Hayes](#) (D) Baltimore City

Sponsor 2: [Joanne Benson](#) (D) Prince George's County

Sponsor 3: [Arthur Ellis](#) (D) Charles County

Senate Committee: [Finance](#)

Senate Committee 2: [Education, Health, & Environment Affairs](#)

Bill Title: Pharmacists – Aids for the Cessation of Tobacco Product Use

Bill Synopsis: Allows certain licensed pharmacists to prescribe & dispense certain aids as cessation for the use of tobacco products

Hearing Date: TBD

Vape Chalet stance: Oppose

[Senate Bill 508 \(SB508\)](#)

Sponsor: [Jack Bailey](#) (R) Calvert County & St. Mary's County

Senate Committee: [Judicial Proceedings](#)

Bill Title: St. Mary's County – Possession of tobacco product or electronic smoking device by an individual under the age of 21 years - Prohibition

Bill Synopsis: Prohibit possession of tobacco or vape device by persons under 21yrs of age, violations are considered a civil offense, military exemption for 18yrs and older

Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 18 @12pm

Vape Chalet stance: TBD

As you can see, there are many bills being considered this year. Feel free to click on the links to get contact info on the legislators that introduced each bill. Also, click on the bill links to read the actual bills being proposed. The hearing dates are in bold and we ask you again - please, please attend the hearings. We want to fill the committee rooms and state house to show a strong support of vaping.

Some have asked when, if passed, will the laws take effect? The process is as follows:

1. Bill introduced in a House or Senate Committee
2. If passed, Bill moves to the floor of the entire House or Senate for a vote
3. If passed, Bill moves to the other chamber for a vote
4. If passed, Bill moves to the Governor's desk for a signature or veto
5. Effective date is listed in the Bill
 - Keep in mind, a bill does not have to be signed by the Governor to become law. He can, however, veto it which sends it back for either a majority vote to override his veto or it dies altogether.

We do not yet know what direction vaping will take - ban or no ban. We will do our best to keep you informed.