



House Bill 732

Electronic Smoking Devices, Other Tobacco Products, and Cigarettes - Taxation and Regulation

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Ways and Means and Economic Development
Committees

Date: February 18, 2020

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 732 as it provides resources and tools to support local public health efforts to address tobacco use and related deaths, disease, and disparities.

HB 732 increases the tobacco tax rate on cigarettes and other tobacco products and imposes a tax on electronic smoking devices. It also removes the prohibition from local governments imposing a tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products -- enabling counties to access an additional tool for use in their own anti-tobacco strategies. These tax changes would generate revenues that can be used to advance state and local public health efforts and other priorities.

Additionally, the bill requires the Governor to increase annual funding for the Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Program. Tobacco use is not only the number one cause of preventable death and disease in the U.S., it leads to thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of cases of tobacco-related diseases in Maryland alone.

Local health departments oversee and implement county tobacco control policies. Increasing the funding for the Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Program from \$10 million to \$21 million would result in an estimated \$3.9 million for local health departments. This funding would directly support crucial local priorities including addressing youth use of tobacco and vaping products, tobacco cessation classes, and tobacco treatment programs.

Stemming tobacco use remains a public health priority for counties and their communities. HB 732 removes preemptive barriers and boosts the resources necessary to implement effective education, prevention, and treatment strategies to advance this effort. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 732.