



January 15, 2024

2024 Virginia General

The first week of the Virginia General Assembly has revealed dozens of bills which we are reviewing for their impact on the membership. This Friday is the deadline for the introduction of new legislation and it is our experience that some of the most controversial and often problematic bills are put in on the last day possible. Committee deliberations will begin in earnest this week with just four weeks before each branch must complete work on legislation introduced there. Here are some of the issues we have identified to date:

Jobbers Are Refiners Issue

So far, two identical bills have been introduced that will mandate independent appraisals for dealer marketing locations. You can view Senator Jeremy McPike's bill [here](#) and Delegate Atoosa Reaser's bill [here](#).

The VPCMA Executive Committee is presently reviewing the bills and their impact on the membership. We will focus on ensuring that provisions relating to right of first refusal or voiding existing supply agreements are not considered in these deliberations. In the coming days we will be developing a policy statement on the two bills and will be asking for your assistance in communicating to members of the Senate Commerce and Labor and House Labor and Commerce (renamed this year) committees prior to consideration.

Skill Games

[Senate bill 212](#) by Senator Aaron Rouse of Virginia Beach passed the Senate Commerce and Labor committee Monday by a vote of 10-5, and was referred to the Senate Finance and Appropriations committee for further deliberation. A standing room only crowd was there to support small business. This bill would return skill games with a limit of 5 games at convenience stores and 10 at truck stops. Consideration of the House version of the bill by Delegate Cliff Hayes ([HB 590](#)) has not been scheduled.

Tobacco Issues

Identical bills have been filed by Delegate Patrick Hope of Arlington ([HB 790](#)) and Adam Ebbin of Alexandria ([SB 582](#)) to require licensing of all sellers of tobacco products, impose a per store license fee, significantly increase penalties in the event of a sale to an underage person, and mandate per location schedule of unannounced underaged buyer inspections. Incredibly, the penalties in the two bills are higher for underage tobacco sales than those imposed on alcohol sales. These bills are unnecessary and punitive as the Virginia Department of Taxation already requires businesses to disclose if they sell tobacco products. The bills are

supported by a coalition of self-described “public health” groups including the American Lung and Heart Associations. Efforts to defeat this bill will be difficult given the new Democratic majorities in both branches.