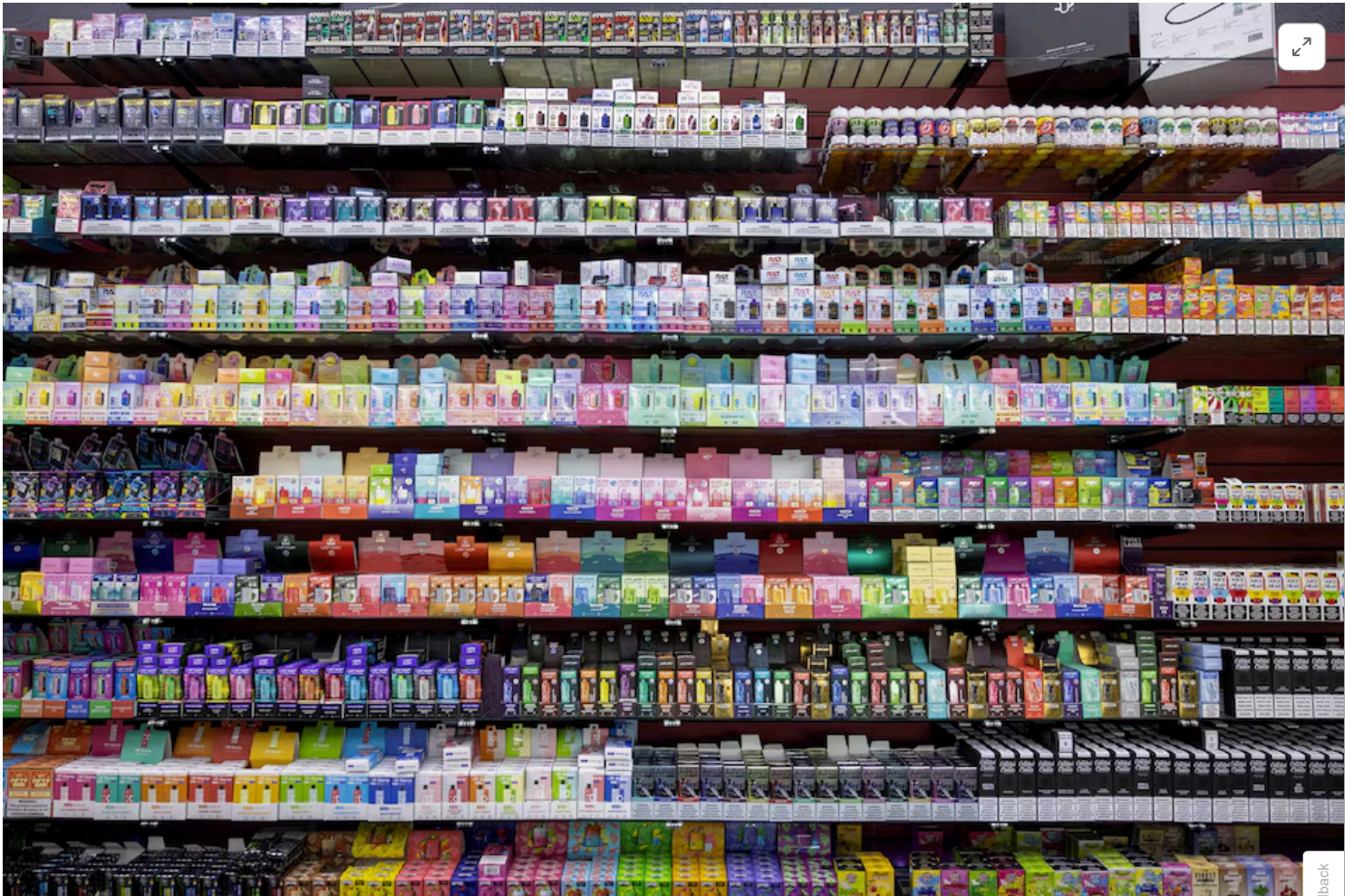# Illegal U.S. vape sales worth at least $2.4 billion in 2024, data shows

By **Emma Rumney**

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[1/2] Various vapes, nicotine products and the new Spree Bar, which contains a chemical that mimics nicotine, line the shelves at Sultans' Smoke in Arvada, Colorado, U.S., May 21, 2024. REUTERS/Kevin... Purchase Licensing Rights ☐ **Read more**

Summary   **Companies**

Unauthorised vapes make up 35% of tracked US e-cigarette market

FDA authorised only 34 tobacco or menthol vape products

FDA crackdown on imports hits sales of some brands

LONDON, Feb 24 (Reuters) - Sales of unauthorised, flavoured disposable vapes in the United States amounted to around $2.4 billion in 2024, or 35% of the e-cigarettes from outlets such as convenience stores and supermarkets, according to private retail sales data reviewed by Reuters.

That compares to sales worth $3.2 billion in 2023 and $2.8 billion in 2022, the data, which comes from market research firm Circana, shows. The data was provided to Reuters by an industry source outside of Circana.

A bar chart where sales of flavoured disposable vapes rise as a portion of all vape sales tracked by Circana over time to reach $3.24 billion in 2023, before dropping back according to preliminary numbers for 2024

Circana said it could not confirm or comment on the data as it was not public.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has only authorised 34 tobacco- or menthol-flavoured vape products for legal sale in the United States, all from big tobacco companies like British American Tobacco (BATS.L) ⤢ and Altria (MO.N) ⤢ .

The private Circana data tracked around 11,000 unauthorised flavoured disposable e-cigarette products on the market from hundreds of brands, spanning flavours such as "cookie and cloud" and "magic cotton candy".

It provides a rare insight into the scale of illegal vape sales across the U.S., where the market has been flooded with unauthorised products.

Circana told Reuters that it estimates the entire vape market it tracks, which includes authorised products as well as non-disposable vapes, was worth $6.8 billion last year.

That would mean that flavoured disposable vapes account for around 35% of the market tracked by Circana. The company's data only tracks sales in certain channels such as convenience stores and does not capture vapes sales made online, in independent stores and in speciality vape outlets.

The figures showed a 25% contraction in flavoured disposable vape sales since 2023. The industry source said Circana's 2024 numbers were preliminary and its data on disposable vapes had been revised upwards in the past.

BAT and Marlboro-maker Altria, whose U.S. tobacco and vape businesses have lost market share to unauthorised products, say the market is growing. Altria estimates the U.S. vape market expanded by 30% in 2024, "driven entirely by illicit products," CEO Billy Gifford told a conference on February 19.

The data showed FDA efforts to crack down have had some impact. Previously top-selling labels Esco Bars and Elf Bars both dropped out of the top 10 most sold devices in 2024 after the FDA blocked their imports in 2023. However, other brands have taken their place.

A bar chart showing the estimated 2024 retail sales of the top ten disposable vape devices in the United States, where the Geek Bar Pulse is by far the most popular with $582.8 million in sales

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Reporting by Emma Rumney; Editing by Christian Schmollinger

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