



May 17, 2021

Council President Amy Brendmoen and members of the City Council:

I am writing to support an upward departure of the tobacco license penalty for East Market Grocery, 913 Payne Avenue.

The Saint Paul ordinance related to the sale of flavored tobacco is clear and this ordinance is obeyed by the vast majority of Saint Paul tobacco vendors. To ignore the misdeeds of this license holder is a slap in the face of the hundreds of vendors who uphold the law.

This vendor's violations are not simple mistakes. He has stocked flavored tobacco products and pre-packaged drug kits, all of which violate Saint Paul's ordinances created to protect community health.

Ignorance of the law cannot be claimed in this case. Saint Paul DSI has met personally with the store owner to educate him about the city's requirements, as the complaint documents. Further, ANSR has sent all licensed vendors print materials that inform vendors which products are legal to sell and which are not. These materials are graphic with easy-to-understand pictures so people with limited English language can easily understand the law's requirements. ANSR offers and promotes free online vendor training so managers and clerks can comply and avoid license violations. A fact sheet promoting the free training is attached. The goal is compliance, not catching people doing wrong.

During many public hearings before this body, tobacco vendors express their support for enforcement and express their displeasure with 'bad actors.' Based on this vendor's violation, he is one of those bad actors.

The health of the community deserves to be protected from flagrant violators. We encourage you to impose an upward departure for this vendor.



Jeanne Weigum
ANSR President