

January 4, 2016

Dear St. Paul City Council Members:

I am strongly in support of Saint Paul's flavored tobacco ordinance that is scheduled for a vote on Wednesday, January 6, 2016. It would:

- Prohibit the sale of candy, sweet, and fruity flavored tobacco products in Saint Paul stores where youth are allowed.
- Require that cigars have a minimum price of \$2.60 each before sales tax for packs of one, two, and three cigars and require four or more cigars be sold for at least \$10.40 before sale tax.

Flavored tobacco is one of the newest ways the tobacco industry appeals to youth.

Cheap cigars, which are often flavored, are appealing to price sensitive youth.

Nicotine damages developing brains and is highly addictive. Almost 90 percent of smokers become addicted to tobacco before the age of 18; 70 percent of middle and high school students who currently use tobacco have used a flavored product.

According to the 2014 Surgeon General's Report, raising the price of tobacco and restricting youth access to tobacco are best practices for reducing youth tobacco use.

Taking this action would demonstrate your support for protecting the health of our youth and reducing preventable chronic disease and health care costs. It would show a commitment to a healthier community. I urge you to vote for this ordinance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Montagne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Montagne
1524 Canfield Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108