

City Council  
15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

Saint Paul City Council Members,

City Council is making the naïve claim that by banning menthol products from our local convenience stores they are saving our city's youth. Kids are going to continue to find a way to get their hands on tobacco products. If anything, we are making it easier for them since the sale of menthol products will go underground with zero adult oversight or regulations put in place. There is already a black market for single cigarettes. This will only grow the problem.

As a parent, I want my children to stay away from tobacco, but that is my job as a parent. I am responsible for ensuring they make healthy decisions, not the city council.

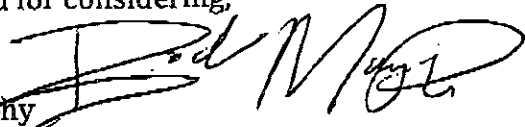
Currently St. Paul has a 97 percent compliance rate for not selling to minors. There are successful regulations in place to keep tobacco out of the hands of minors.

Only 1 percent of St. Paul residents think this is a top priority. How about we focus on matters like: the heroin and opioid epidemic, the rise of violent crimes, sex trafficking, holding the line on property taxes, and the list goes on.

Don't waste time addressing issues that are not important to the city.

If City Council wants to be effective in improving the lives of its citizens, they need to focus on what really matters.

Thank you for considering,

  
Bob Murphy  
1175 Charles Ave  
Saint Paul, MN 55104  
651-260-1351

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

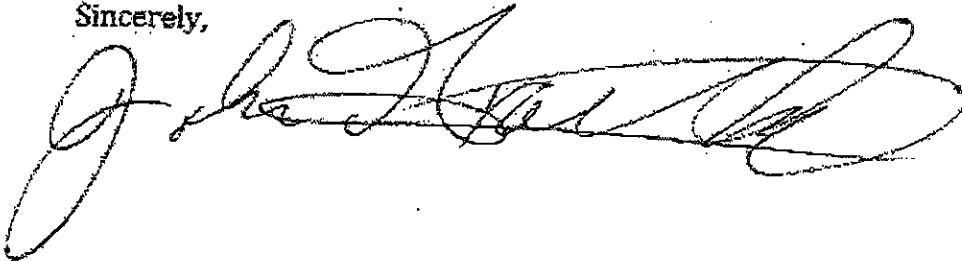
City Council members,

Please don't make my life more difficult by banning menthol cigarettes. This ban is not going to fix any problems for this city; it will only create more problems for people like me.

I don't have access to a car to take me across the city to buy menthol cigarettes. It is easier right now to say that it isn't too much of a burden to go farther away to buy my cigarettes, but in a few months, I will have to cross town in snow, ice, and freezing temperatures just to get a legal product.

I am asking you to please not ban menthol cigarettes in St. Paul. This is a completely unnecessary ban and it is only going to hurt the people who cannot afford to or don't have the time to go farther away to buy their menthols.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John H. H. H. H.", written in a cursive style. The signature is large and occupies the lower half of the page.

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

City Council is acting without thinking. You are going to kill jobs with this ban. You are going to make it harder to survive in this already tough economy.

If this ban is put in place, retailers only thirty days to implement the new ordinance. The City Council is not even taking into consideration that retailers may have months of inventory in their stores. The loss of profit for these individuals will be beyond damaging to their business.

Thankfully, Councilmember Thao was on the side of the retailers and asked for an extension on the implementation period. Instead of thirty days, he was able to get retailers ninety days before implementation would begin. As great of a success as that was, we hope that it does not get to that point.

The City Council needs to slow down and consider the effect a ban like this will have on our communities.

Show us you care about small business and that you are listening to the people you are supposed to represent.

Sincerely,



172 COOK AVE E

ST. PAUL MN 55102

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

City Councilmember Thao seems to be the only person on the City Council who understands the needs of the people of St. Paul. He is standing up for retailers and consumers throughout the city and I applaud him for his amendment on the menthol ban: giving retailers more time to figure out what they are going to do if this menthol ban is put in place.

The rest of you on City Council could take a lesson from him.

This ban will take away a major source of income from our local corner markets. Because of this, they will be forced to cut jobs or raise prices to make up the difference. Poverty is already a problem facing St. Paul; we do not need to put bans in place that will do nothing but add to the problem.

These job-killing policies need to stop.

Sincerely,

*Derrick Bae*

894 Selby Ave  
St. Paul, MN, 55104

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

You cannot claim to be pro-small business and pro-menthol ban without completely contradicting yourselves. This ban kills jobs and threatens the livelihood of convenience store owners and their employees. City Council, you need to slow down before voting on this regulation.

Thank you, Councilmember Thao for extending the implementation period. It shows that you understand the implications this ban will have on local businesses. However, the fight isn't over. We cannot let the ban get to this point. If the Council believes in individuals' rights of and wants our local businesses to succeed, then you will vote no on this destructive ban.

Sincerely,



17390 Lorence way Eden Prairie, MN.

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

City Council, what do you expect me to do when you pass this ban on menthol cigarettes? I live in an area where my corner store is not only a place I buy a pack of cigarettes, but also where I get my groceries to feed my family.

I live in an area where the only stores around are corner markets. If you pass this ban, it threatens those stores' ability to stay in business. I don't have a car or have much extra money for transportation, so being able to walk down the street to get dinner is extremely important to me.

I am worried that you have not thought this ban through. Do you think people are going to just stop smoking because it's out of reach? That's not the case. People are going to continue to smoke.

If local convenience stores are forced to remove menthol tobacco products, they will lose a large percent of their revenue. What's even more damning is that City Council wanted this ban to be implemented thirty days after the vote, showing complete disregard of businesses' inventory. Thankfully, Councilmember Thao was there to speak for retailers and pushed for that to be extended to ninety days.

Sincerely,

*Donna Richards, 1264 Payne Ave*

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council members,

This menthol ban is shameful. Why are you only targeting my cigarettes?

Cigarettes without menthol are just as harmful. Kids who want to try smoking don't even know the difference between menthol and regular cigarettes.

When you pass this ban, I will have to stop going to my neighborhood store and I will have to get on a bus and add time to my day to get a legal product while people who prefer regular cigarettes get to keep going to my store.

Making it more difficult for me to get my cigarettes won't stop people from smoking. It will only make it more difficult for the communities that smoke menthol to get their pack.

Sincerely,

*Thomas R. Schalte*  
*863 margaret*

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

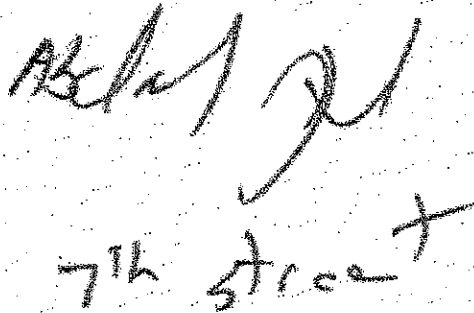
I don't think it is the place for City Council to tell me, a law-abiding citizen of St. Paul, where I can and cannot purchase a *legal* product in my city. That is exactly what you are doing with the menthol ban.

With this ban you are sending the message that you know what is better for me than I know for myself. It also tells me that you do not care about small business owners. These stores depend on menthol sales to pay their bills.

I would however like to thank Councilmember Thao for proposing the amendment that would give retailers ninety days instead of thirty days to implement the ban if it goes through. He seems to be the only one who understands the toll this ban will take on stores throughout the city.

I'm asking the City Council to please take a moment to think about what this ban will actually do to our neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

  
7th Street



September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

The City Council's attempt to ban the sale of menthol tobacco will do nothing but hurt local convenience stores. Sale of menthol tobacco will simply move to surrounding communities instead of keeping the money here in St. Paul. This ban will not stop the sale of menthol tobacco, but will increase the probability of it being sold underground. The police don't need to be wasting their time figuring out where I get a legal product. Let me just reiterate that we are talking about a *legal* product.

I am convinced City Council hasn't thought this through completely. Councilmember Thao got an extension on the implementation period, and for that I thank him, but much more needs to be done.

You need to listen to what the people in the community are saying, and we are saying we do not want this harmful ban ruining our local markets that we rely on for more than just tobacco.

Sincerely,

Barbara Bennett  
1780 Adelphi  
Maplewood, MN 55117

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

You can try and say that you are doing this because you don't want teens smoking, but this ban isn't going to keep teens from smoking. If anything you're making it easier for them.

People are just going to start selling menthol underground. I'm sure the individuals who will begin to sell menthol out of the trunks of their cars are not going to ask for age verification.

This ban is going to cause people to lose their jobs in the name of a failed attempt to curb teen smoking.

City Council, listen to what the people are telling you. Do not pass this harmful ban.

Sincerely,

Michelle R Peoples  
Strand A 55105

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

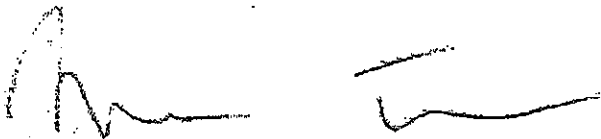
St. Paul City Council Members,

City Council, what is the big rush? This ban isn't as simple as you think you aren't going to save smokers from themselves like you're hoping to. You need slow down.

Convenience stores rely heavily on these types of products to keep their doors open. How is it fair that one guy can walk down the street and buy their preferred products and another has to go across town to one of the few tobacco-only shops we have here in St. Paul? What if transportation is an issue? If I don't have a car or can't afford an Uber does that mean I don't have the right to purchase my preferred product simply because I don't have as much money as the next guy?

Councilmember Thao, thank you for your amendment to extend the implementation period from thirty days to ninety days. It's clear you understand the impact this ban will have on stores, but we cannot let it get to that point if we want small businesses to thrive in St. Paul.

Sincerely,



September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

I want to first thank Councilmember Thao for his efforts to extend the implementation period of the menthol ban from thirty days to ninety days. It's clear you understand the shock retailers will experience if this ban is passed. As a resident of your ward, I ask you to continue the fight for retailers.

City Council has larger issues to focus on than what legal products business owners choose to sell in their stores.

Leave business alone. And, if you are going to get involved, make sure the effect is a positive one. This ban has nothing but negative consequences for our local economy. Local business owners will have to lay off workers to make up for lost revenue if this ban is passed.

Your good intentions to stop smoking are going to result in an increase in poverty. All the while, people will continue to smoke the products they prefer.

Sincerely,

Thomas Campbell  
BATES AVE.

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

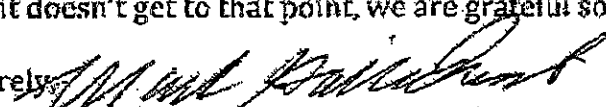
St. Paul City Council Members,

City Council members say they care about small businesses and decreasing the poverty rate, but their actions say something entirely different. This menthol ban isn't going to stop people from smoking. What the ban will do is close the corner stores we rely so heavily on in my community.

You are going to force people to lose their jobs with this ban. People who have put their lives into their stores will have to close their doors. You are rushing through this process so quickly that it is clear that you don't care about the effect it's going to have on the community. You just think it will look good in the headlines. You get your press release and then you leave us with the consequences.

Councilmember Thao, thank you for extending the implementation period. While we hope it doesn't get to that point, we are grateful someone is looking out for us.

Sincerely,



1110 E. 4th ST.  
ST. PAUL MN 55106

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

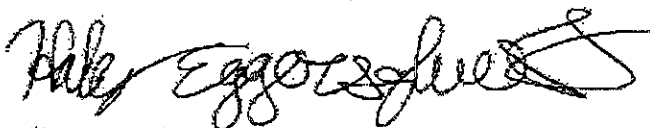
This menthol ban isn't going to work out the way you are expecting it to. People are going to continue to smoke; they will just have to go further away to get the stuff they like.

What will happen is that the corner markets we rely on in my neighborhood will struggle to keep prices low and their doors open. Corner markets aren't just a place for smokers to buy their cigarettes; families like my own rely on these places to get food and other goods for their day-to-day lives.

I don't have a car, so how will I be able to get the things my family needs when these stores eventually close down because of the loss of profits they faced when this ban was put in place?

You need to think about the real consequences that this ban will have and not just what you are hoping it will accomplish.

Sincerely,



627 Mendota St Saint Paul

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council,

Just because you disagree with me smoking menthols, doesn't mean you should just ban them from my store. There are many things you can do to educate children about smoking without making my life more difficult.

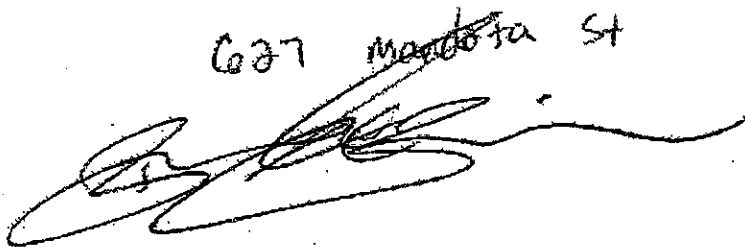
I go to the same store in my neighborhood regularly to buy my menthol cigarettes along with other things I need for my home. You are going to make it so that I have to travel out of my neighborhood to pick up cigarettes and then go to another store to get other things that I need.

That might not seem like it is a problem to you, but it is to people who have to use public transportation and could lose hours out of their week just so that you can say you banned menthol. Meanwhile, regular cigarettes are on the shelves of every store.

Don't disregard my time and money just because you look down on me for smoking menthol.

Sincerely Brandon Zimmerman

627 mandota st

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name Brandon Zimmerman, written over the address line.

September 26, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

I respect the City Council's efforts to keep teens from smoking but the menthol ban is not going to have the positive effect you are hoping for. This ban is going to make it easier for kids to get their hands on menthol tobacco.

Once menthol is banned from our local retailers, it's going to drive the distribution underground. The individuals selling menthol are not going to care how young the customer is.

The solution to teen smoking is rooted in education. We need to focus on educating our youth about the harmful effects smoking can have on someone while still respecting adults' decisions on whether they choose to smoke or not.

Sincerely,

Joyce Kanevsky



September 25, 2017

City Council  
15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council members,

I don't like this menthol ban. The whole goal of the menthol ban is to keep kids away from tobacco, but I can tell you that it won't stop kids from getting their hands on something they should not have.

Beyond that, you are only banning menthol cigarettes. If a kid really wants to try smoking, they are not going to care what color the box is. They will try anything.

I should have the right to find the cigarettes I choose to use in my neighborhood. I don't have the time or the resources to just get in a car and drive to a smoke shop. I should be able to go to the same convenience store I always go to.

I don't think the city council really sees the burden they are putting on my neighborhood convenience store and me by banning menthol. If you visited my neighborhood, you would see that this is not right.

Don't ban menthol in St. Paul.

Sincerely, Michael D. Brown

Michd Brown

September 25, 2017

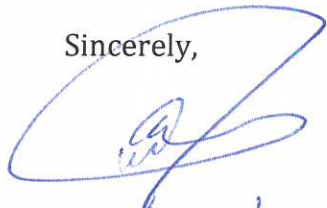
City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

When somebody makes a quick stop to buy a pack of cigarettes, most of the time that isn't the only thing they leave the store with. They grab a snack, something to drink, or a candy bar. By banning the sale of menthol products from their stores you aren't only eliminating that single item from their profit margin, you are also taking away all the other little things customers grab during their stop.

Before voting on this ban, there needs to be a complete understanding of the impact this is going to have. There is no smoking gun demanding that this issue be settled now: so, why the rush? You need to slow down and think of everything before acting.

Sincerely,



Ahmad Zahed

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September 25, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

While your intentions are good, wanting to limit teens' access to harmful tobacco products, this is not the way to achieve that goal. Kids will get these products even easier if the distribution is pushed underground. The punishment for teen smoking should not fall on the retailers who are already doing a good job not selling to teens in St. Paul.

The effects of this ban do more harm than good, and it's clear that you need more time to see that. Your job is to make the lives of the people you represent easier, and this ban will do the exact opposite.

Councilmember Thao has taken a step in the right direction by extending the implementation period if this ban does pass, and I thank him for that. But, we cannot let it get to that point. I urge you all to vote against this harmful ordinance.

Sincerely,

*A. Thomas*

651.500.3421

45 W. LAWSON AVE

ST. PAUL, MN 55117

September 25, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

It is not the City Council's place to tell me what legal products I can and cannot buy from my local convenience store. This is a complete overreach of your power and I will not sit by silently while you try to take away my rights as an adult citizen of St. Paul. At the same time you're trying to limit my rights, you are destroying our local stores ability to be successful in St. Paul.

I'm asking you all to follow in Councilmember Thao's footsteps. He is clearly taking into consideration the effects this ban will have on local retailers, which is apparent by his efforts to extend the implementation period.

Before rushing into a vote, consider the irreversible consequences this ban will have on St. Paul.

Sincerely,

Indy Buckmiller  
1871 7th St E #11  
St Paul, MN 55119

September 25, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

City Council, you are threatening my neighbors with this ban. I rely on my neighborhood convenience stores to buy my family food. Menthol is a big part of these stores' revenue. If you put this ban in place, stores are going to have to raise the prices on other items. I already struggle to make ends meet, why are you trying to make it tougher for me?

People are also going to lose their jobs because revenue will be lost.

These job-killing policies need to stop or, at the very least be given the time to assess the damage they could cause before making a decision that affects an entire city.

Do not rush this decision. Councilmember Thao is taking positive steps in assessing the impact this will have on local businesses: I encourage the rest of you to follow suit.

Sincerely,

*Sharon Mitchell*  
*133. Magnolia ave east*  
*St. Paul, MN. 55117*  
*651-274-4179*



September 25, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

I don't think it is the City Council's place to tell adults what they can and can't do.

That is exactly what's happening with the menthol ban. You are telling the people of St. Paul that you are better at making personal decisions for them than they are. That is insulting.

Do you understand the wide range of impacts this ban will have on our community? Banning a legal product from corner markets without considering the negative effects this will have on the owners and employees of these stores is short sided.

Please take some time to figure out the fallout from implementing a ban on a legal product.

Sincerely, *Antoinette Gbsby*  
*133 Magnolia Ave Est,*  
*1-651-424-3600*

September 25, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

St. Paul has more pressing issues than where I can and cannot buy my cigarettes. City Council should be spending their time on problems that actually matter.

So many of the issues St. Paul is facing could be resolved with a reduction in poverty. This ban will ultimately eliminate even more jobs.

I know that the stores in my neighborhood rely on menthol as a large part of their profits. If this ban goes through, employers are going to have to lay people off and possibly even close down.

The only City Council member who seems to understand the impact a ban like this would have on retailers is Councilmember Thao. So I thank him for proposing the amendment to extend the implementation period from thirty days to ninety days.

Keep up the good work Councilmember Thao! Now lets get the rest of City Council to see things from your point of view!

Sincerely,

*Thomas Greiner*  
594 W. Minnehaha Ave St. Paul MN 55103

September 25, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

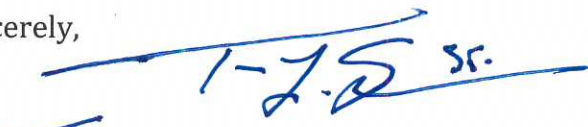
Menthol is not what is ruining this city. High taxes, a ballooning crime rate, and unfounded mandates are the problem. This ban will make it harder for small business owners to survive.

This ban is going to kill jobs and force local businesses to close. If you take away a business' major source of income, you take away that business' ability to be successful. We need to support local business.

Councilman Thao proposed an amendment to extend the implementation period from thirty days to ninety days and I would like to thank him for that. But we cannot let this ban get to that point.

This ban will do more harm than good, and City Council needs to see that.

Sincerely,

  
Terrence L. Shambley Sr.



September 25, 2017

City Council  
15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council members,

I know you tried to make it impossible to afford cigarettes by raising taxes to get us to stop smoking. Since that did not work, you shifted gears and decided that banning menthol cigarettes would do the trick. This won't work either.

All this menthol ban will accomplish is making people leave the safety of their own neighborhood to either walk or take a bus to an adult smoke shop instead of going to the store they always go to.

I can't afford to waste my time and money travelling across town to get my pack of cigarettes just so that you can feel good about banning menthols.

Please don't waste my time and the City's time banning menthol.

Sincerely,

Hussein Hashem

12443 Drape St NW

COON RAPIDS, MN 55448

910-835-7420

September 25, 2017

City Council  
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.  
Room 310  
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

City Council needs to slow down.

The menthol ban is not as simple as voting on an issue and saving smokers. City Council hasn't stopped for even a second to think about how this is going to affect people like my neighbors and me.

There are families in my community that rely on these stores for their groceries. When these stores are forced to close, are you going to pick them up and drive them to the store since you've left us in a food desert?

However, there is one City Council member who stands out from the rest and that is Councilmember Thao. He understands the impact this will have on our community. At the public hearing Wednesday, he proposed and succeeded in extending the implementation period from thirty days to ninety days. The rest of City Council should follow his lead in considering the consequences a rushed ban like this will have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dahnin Mun". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dahnin" and the last name "Mun" clearly distinguishable.