

Good afternoon Council President Lantry and Council Members:

I am writing today on behalf of the members of the Minnesota Service Station & Convenience Store Association operating retail outlets within your wards/districts. Ordinance No. 14-34 would prohibit the sale of cigars in packages of less than five and a single cigar would now retail above \$2.10. This ordinance would have a huge impact on my retail members, but more importantly the retailers in your wards/ districts. Retailers in your wards/districts comply every day with the Federal and State Laws preventing the youth from obtaining tobacco products , including cigars . Numbers from the Minnesota Dept. of Human Services, the 2102 Synar Report reflects our retailers in Minnesota are passing underage tobacco stings at an average rate of 97.6% which ranks our retailers second in the country in preventing sale of tobacco products to minors.

The tobacco industry represents anywhere from 40% to 60% of a stores inside store sales. This proposed ban would force St. Paul retailers to remove up to 65% of the cigar packages sold in their stores currently. This may deter customers as they will visit nearby retail/tobacco outlets outside of St. Paul as a direct result of Ordinance 14-34. St. Paul retailers will suffer, thus creating an anti-business climate for our industry in the city of St. Paul.

Please support your local businesses within your wards/districts and please think about opposing Ordinance 14-34. Please call me or email me if you have questions. I would love to hear from all of you, most importantly, I can set up meetings between yourselves and the business owners within your wards/districts to get a better understanding how this will affect their business, their bottom line, their city... St. Paul.

Thanks for listening.

Lance

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