

From: [Bruce Nustad](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul_Contact-Council](#); [CouncilHearing \(CI-StPaul\)](#)
Subject: Council Public Hearing - Amending Chapter 324-Tobacco
Date: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 4:05:35 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
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Subject: Amending Chapter 324-Tobacco/Opposition to Proposed Changes

Dear St. Paul City Councilors,

On behalf of our members and in alignment with our shared commitment to the success of St. Paul businesses, we are writing to express our opposition to the proposed changes in the City's tobacco ordinance, specifically regarding the reduction of tobacco licenses, the denial of license transfers and the absence of provisions for grandfathering all existing licensees.

While we acknowledge the City's objectives to shape policies that align with public health goals, we believe that these proposed changes will disrupt the economic landscape of store succession, particularly affecting the potential generational wealth of retail operations, including those owned by new Americans who have made significant investments in our community.

Denying license transfers and the lack of grandfathering provisions for existing licensees creates financial challenges and limits the opportunities for those looking to invest in or inherit existing businesses. This is particularly impactful for smaller, family-owned retail establishments that have been part of the fabric of St. Paul for many years. Moreover, if St. Paul enacts these restrictions, there is a high likelihood that tobacco users will continue to seek to purchase these products outside the city limits. This not only defeats the intended purpose but also results in a loss of revenue for businesses within St. Paul.

We understand the importance of balancing public health concerns with economic considerations, but local retailers already strictly follow all tobacco regulations including age verification. These retailers serve an important role as partners in ensuring the legal sales of products to adult consumers. Restrictive policies in this regard may inadvertently lead to negative consequences such as the closure of established businesses, potential job losses, and the erosion of community wealth.

We urge the St. Paul City Council to carefully weigh the potential consequences of these proposed changes and consider alternative approaches that foster collaboration between the city and retailers. We believe that working together on educational initiatives and other collaborative efforts would be more effective in achieving public health goals without jeopardizing the economic well-being of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to an ongoing dialogue that prioritizes the prosperity of St. Paul.

Sincerely,

Bruce Nustad, Minnesota Retailers Association
Jamie Pfuhl, Minnesota Grocers Association
Lance Klatt, Minnesota Service Station & Convenience Store Association

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