

ORD 14-34
Item 23 - 812014



RECEIVED
AUG 18 2014
CITY CLERK

August 11, 2014

Honorable Members
Saint Paul City Council
15 W Kellogg Blvd
St Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Members,

Tobacco use is responsible for one-third of all cancer deaths in Minnesota and it remains the most preventable cause of death in the state. Tobacco-related diseases kill more than 5,100 Minnesotans per year and are responsible for nearly \$3 billion in excess health care costs. These costs are borne by taxpayers, employers and families regardless of whether they use tobacco products.

The tobacco industry is evolving, creating new products and marketing strategies that circumvent existing tobacco policies, in an effort to keep smokers addicted and attract new customers. Cigars are dangerous, yet sales are increasing and use by youth is rising. The most significant trend in cigars is the use of "little" cigars and cigarillos, which are often the same size as cigarettes but can be flavored. Sales of little cigars and cigarillos have skyrocketed and while cigar smokers in the past were mainly middle-aged and older, many new cigar users today are teens and young adults.

Cigars are not a safer alternative to cigarettes. They contain the same cancer-causing substances as cigarettes and other tobacco products. Cigar smoking increases the risk of some cancers. In fact, cigar smokers are four to 10 times more likely to die from laryngeal, oral, or esophageal cancers than nonsmokers. Cigars should be subject to the same taxation and marketing rules as all other tobacco products in order to reduce the deadly and costly burden of tobacco use. Cigars, whether large or small, must be taxed and subject to the same packaging rules as a pack of cigarettes.

Local governments play an important role in protecting community members, particularly youth, from the health hazards of tobacco use. The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network supports local policies that regulate the use, sale and marketing of tobacco products as an effective catalyst for achieving local and statewide reductions in tobacco use. We urge you to support efforts to strengthen and modernize St. Paul's tobacco ordinances.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Schafer".

Matt Schafer
Minnesota Government Relations Director
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network