



November 5, 2015

Members of the St. Paul City Council
15 Kellogg Blvd West
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Members of the City Council:

On behalf of ClearWay Minnesota, a statewide nonprofit organization working to reduce tobacco's harm in Minnesota, I want to express our support for the ordinance under your consideration that would limit the sale of flavored tobacco products and raise the price of cheap cigars and cigarillos that appeal to youth.

Creating flavored tobacco products is one significant way the tobacco industry appeals to kids. Chocolate cigars, peach chewing tobacco and cherry e-cigarettes are available in stores where kids shop in every neighborhood of St. Paul. By restricting the sale of flavored tobacco to adult-only tobacco shops we can limit youth access to these products, which look kid-friendly but can lead to a lifetime of addiction.

Additionally, cheap cigars, which are often flavored, are appealing to youth. Increasing the price of these products will make them less attractive and affordable to kids. Minneapolis and Bloomington recently set a minimum price for cheap cigars at \$2.60 each. Establishing the same minimum price in St. Paul will create a more uniform policy across the metro area and ease enforcement.

Almost 90 percent of smokers become addicted to tobacco before the age of 18 and in St. Paul there are too many youth headed down that path.

Research also shows that the tobacco industry specifically targets communities of color, the LGBTQ community and other vulnerable populations with advertising and promotions. As a result, these communities are disproportionately impacted by disease and death caused by tobacco use.

St. Paul has been a longtime leader when it comes to protecting the health of residents. Please support this effort to reduce the harm of tobacco and help build a smoke-free future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Molly Moilanen, M.P.P.
Director of Public Affairs
ClearWay Minnesota