



November 10, 2015

Honorable Members
Saint Paul City Council
15 W Kellogg Blvd #310
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council President Stark and Members of the Saint Paul City Council:

I am writing on behalf of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network to express our support for the proposed ordinance that would restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products to adult-only tobacco shops. Tobacco use is responsible for one-third of all cancer deaths in Minnesota and it remains the most preventable cause of death in Saint Paul and our state. The tobacco industry is evolving, creating new products and marketing strategies to keep smokers addicted and attract new customers, including youth. These products include cheap, flavored, small cigars and cigarillos.

Candy and fruit flavored tobacco products mask the harsh taste of tobacco, and are attractive to youth. Young smokers report choosing flavored tobacco products over cigarettes because they “taste better” and are perceived to be “safer.” However, they are just as dangerous as cigarettes with the same health risks of cancer, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Local governments play an important role in protecting community members, particularly youth, from the health hazards of tobacco use. Flavored tobacco products are readily accessible to young people. About four fifths (79%) of Saint Paul’s 262 tobacco retailers sell flavored tobacco products. The proposed ordinance would reduce the number of stores that can carry flavored tobacco products down to about 16 stores. 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.

Saint Paul has been a longtime leader when it comes to protecting the health and safety of our youth. We need to continue to do everything we can to protect the health of our young people. By taking these products out of stores youth visit daily, Saint Paul will help prevent another generation from becoming lifelong tobacco users. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Ellie Beaver
Minnesota Government Relations Director
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network