



HMONG 18 COUNCIL, INC.

320 University Avenue West #10

Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103

Phone: 651-487-8070

www.hmong18councilmn.org

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Legal Counsel:

Attorney Anivuin Xiong
PANGAEA Law Group

May 4, 2017

Dear Mayor Chris Coleman, Council President Russ Stark, and Members of the Saint Paul City Council:

I am writing on behalf of the Hmong 18 Clan Council. The Hmong 18 Clan Council is a leadership organization that consists of 18 elected Hmong leaders to represent the Hmong community. The Hmong 18 Council of Minnesota existed since 1997. Our mission is to enhance the Hmong Community in social justice, traditional values and practices and develop emerging leaders. Our passion has always been to keep the Hmong Traditional Culture alive; lead and organize young Hmong-Americans towards becoming productive citizens; and to listen and solve local community challenges. As leaders in our community, we strive to lead and organize younger generations to live long and healthy lifestyles.

Thousands of Hmong people are proud to call St. Paul home. We are writing today to ask that you restrict the sale menthol tobacco in our community. Saint Paul has already prohibited the sale of candy and fruit flavored tobacco products in stores where kids can enter. The same should be done for menthol tobacco.

For years, the tobacco industry has strategically targeted communities of color with menthol cigarettes. A survey conducted in Ramsey County found that menthol tobacco advertising was more common in neighborhoods with higher concentrations of Asian Americans, other communities of color, low income, and youth residents.¹ According to the Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey in 2014, 44% of Minnesota high school smokers, use menthol tobacco. Menthol masks that harsh flavor of tobacco. As a result, menthol tobacco is easier to start. Studies also found that it is also harder to quit.

Saint Paul has been a longtime leader when it comes to protecting the health and safety of our youth. I hope the Saint Paul City Council considers taking action to protect youth and our community from these deadly products. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Wa Houa Vue
President

¹Widome et. al., 2013.