



September 12, 2017

Members of Saint Paul City Council
15 Kellogg Blvd. West, 310 City Hall
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Members of the Saint Paul City Council:

The American Indian Cancer Foundation is an organization that focuses on the health of American Indian people and is committed to addressing the use of menthol tobacco in order to improve the health of American Indians in the Twin Cities. As members of the Saint Paul City Council, we encourage you to lead the way and support the proposal that will ensure menthol tobacco products are no longer sold in stores youth visit.

The tobacco industry has targeted American Indians with menthol cigarettes for decades. In the recent Tribal Tobacco Use Project Study, we found that 42% of American Indians smokers in the urban area smoke menthol tobacco. The smooth taste of menthol masks the harshness of smoke making it easier for people to start and harder to quit.

Menthol cigarettes are marketed to urban populations and a majority of menthol smokers support new laws to reduce tobacco's harm. The ordinance you are considering would reduce youth exposure to these harmful products at stores they routinely shop.

Tobacco use takes a devastating toll on our community. American Indians have the highest death rate and shortest survival rate from most cancers. You have the opportunity to put the lives of young people of color before tobacco industry profits. The choice is clear.

We urge the City Council to continue to be a leader in promoting a healthy community by keeping tobacco out of the hands of our young people. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Kris Rhodes".

Kris Rhodes, MPH
Chief Executive Officer