



September 15, 2017

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:

On behalf of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), I wanted to express our strong support of your efforts to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products to adult-only tobacco shops. In 2015, the council voted to restrict the sale of fruit- and candy-flavored tobacco to adult-only tobacco shops. Now is the time to apply the same restriction to menthol-flavored tobacco.

For years, tobacco use has been the number one preventable cause of death in our country and our state. Smoking kills over 6,300 Minnesotans each year and costs the state more than \$3 billion annually in excess health care costs. Despite this, we continue to let the tobacco industry addict young people to their deadly products.

The tobacco industry targets young people with menthol-flavored tobacco products. As a result, 44 percent of high school students who smoke use menthol cigarettes. Tobacco companies add menthol to tobacco products to cool the throat and make them taste better. Menthol cigarettes make it easier to start smoking and harder to stop.

The tobacco industry also targets African Americans, women and the LGBTQ community. Of African Americans who smoke, 88 percent smoke menthol cigarettes, compared to 25 percent of adult smokers overall. Also, African Americans are disproportionately affected by tobacco-related health issues.

By adopting this ordinance, Saint Paul will be at the forefront of helping to prevent another generation from becoming lifelong tobacco users. Again, we strongly support the city's efforts to move this important ordinance forward.

Saint Paul has been a longtime leader when it comes to protecting the health and safety of our youth. We need to do continue to do everything we can to protect the health of our young people. Saint Paul will help prevent another generation from becoming lifelong tobacco users.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ellie Beaver".

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