

Councilmember Thao,

I am one of your constituents, and I'm asking that you please support the measure placing menthol tobacco in adult-only shops. Youth and African-Americans would be helped most by this measure, dropping future healthcare costs by not smoking in the first place. When the same measure was going forward in Minneapolis, 93 percent of those surveyed said they would continue to shop at convenience stores for items such as food and drinks, even if they could no longer purchase menthol-flavored tobacco there. Constituents that own stores would lose little revenue and we could significantly reduce future healthcare costs and burden.

I hope that you'll help St. Paul be an example for cities around the US to take care of their citizens first.

Thanks,
Kelli

Hello Council Member Thao,

I would like to voice my concerns and opinions in regards to the menthol voting process that will take place tomorrow. I heard that there is a plan to delay this issue however I strongly believe that we should postpone this serious health concern.

I am not sure if you have seen this article or not however there are multiple leaders in your ward who would like to restrict the menthol sale in convenience stores. I will link the article below here:

<http://www.twincities.com/2017/09/25/st-pauls-black-leaders-want-menthol-tobacco-sale-restrictions>

As a resident in your ward who has supported you for years, I really hope that you make the correct decision and will support our city from harm of tobacco industries and preserve the safety of our future generations.

Thank you,

Pa Chia Yang

> Please do not support this Tobacco ban council member Dai Thao. I am the store manager at Big Discount Liquors 945 Rice St. St. Paul, MN 55117, in your ward. We are a business that operates in the most professional and respectful way. All of my staff members understand the importance of I.D'ing customers and we regulate this. Please do not support the ban, Mr. Thao, support an amendment to keep menthol Tobacco in liquor stores. -Ed Her

Dear Council Member Thao,

I am a constituent writing to express my strong support for including menthol tobacco in St. Paul's current flavored tobacco ordinance. This policy is a bold step toward protecting our children from a lifetime of tobacco addiction and addressing the troubling health inequities that are all too prevalent in our city. We know that the tobacco industry targets young people, African Americans and the LGBTQ community with menthol tobacco, and it's time to close this gap in our existing policy.

Menthol flavoring makes it easier to start smoking and harder to quit. Young people are especially at risk for addiction because their brains are still developing until age 25. Almost half of Minnesota high school smokers use menthols and we must take further action to restrict access to these harmful products.

I hope you will vote to regulate menthol just as you have supported regulating the other flavors.

Thank you,

John Krapek
8XX N Capitol Heights, St Paul, MN 55103

Councilmember Thao,

I am writing you this to both thank you for allowing me to speak last Wednesday evening and to ask you to consider allowing the off premise liquor stores, to continue to sell Menthol Tobacco products. As you know, the City of Minneapolis had the same issue come up not so long ago. The City of Minneapolis was convinced that our off premise establishments vetted customers like no other retail outlet in Minnesota. As a result, they allowed liquor stores to continue to sell Menthol tobacco products.

Liquor stores do not allow customers in their stores if they are not over the age of 21 and if they are not, they MUST be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. This policy is strictly adhered to and not wavered from.

Please consider allowing these proud family run businesses to continue to sell these products as they have in the past. We are the most careful as it pertains to youth access.

Thank you for your time and if you have questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out.

Take care and please open the attachment for a better explanation to our stance and request.

Tony Chesak



9/25/2017

St. Paul City Council Members,

I wanted to thank you all for the opportunity to speak to you last Wednesday the 20th in regards to the Menthol Ban. It was a late night for all and I wanted to express my gratitude.

As I stated during my brief time last week, the off premise industry vets their customers more than any other retail business that I am aware of, even more than the proposed tobacco shops. St. Paul's liquor stores sell this legal product now and do so with great care and responsibility. We do not allow customers in our establishments without being over the age of 21. If they are, a parent or legal guardian MUST accompany them. We even turn away business to our customers if they are exhibiting signs of obvious intoxication or impairment.

Our liquor stores are responsible folks and I assure you, I will do my best to remind them of the importance of preventing youth access.

On behalf of the off premise industry in St. Paul, I am asking for you all to consider, allowing the off premise liquor stores to be included in the continued sale of Menthol Tobacco products. I will be asking some of our retailers to be present on the 27th to present their cases and to ensure you that due to our responsible business models, we are also perfect candidates to sell this product that should never be in the hands of minors.

Have a great day and if you have any questions, please reach out to me, as I will with you. I look forward to the council meeting on Wednesday the 27th. We appreciate you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tony Chesak", is written over a horizontal line.

Tony Chesak

Hi, I called and left a message on your phone stating that I completely agree on getting rid of the menthol, mint, and wintergreen tobacco sales in SA, just that alone will save countless lives from the damage caused by cigarettes. Don't let the opposition get to you. What you're doing is honorable.

Beth Olson

Councilmember Thao,

My name is Dave Bergstrand. I'm a medical student at the U of M and a resident in your ward. We met briefly this summer about the menthol ordinance in St Paul -- I was in the group from the Physicians Advocacy Network.

Tobacco prevention is incredibly important to me as a future physician, and I want to **sincerely thank you** for your commitment to this issue. The work you've put in and your continued support is invaluable.

I'm looking forward to the vote next Wednesday!

Best,
Dave Bergstrand

--

David W. Bergstrand | M.D. Candidate, Class of 2020
University of Minnesota Medical School, Twin Cities

Dear Council Member Dai Thao,

I am writing to you in regards to the hearing that occurred a few days ago and would like to voice my opinions. I met earlier back in July with Twin Cities Medical Society and asked for your support with our Menthol Policy which you agreed to support and I would like to thank you for that again.

I would like to share my story of how menthol has affected my life and the rest of my family. We all belong to a family and it is our family that keeps us together through thick and thin. Without having a family, no person is complete and the completeness comes with good family bonding. However due to the influence of menthol, my family is in danger of their health and well being. My father has been a smoker for all of his life, he has been struggling to quit and due to the addiction and sickness, he was been unable to work to support my family. My mother is the only provider in my family of nine people. Because my brothers grew up seeing this type of behavior, they eventually started smoking as well.

Council member Dai Thao, speaking as a Hmong American woman, a daughter, and a sister who has been actively participating and supporting the community, we both know that the community has very little education with Menthol. They do not fully understand the harm of exposure and danger of what it can do to yourself, your family, or your surrounding until it is too late. I am providing my story today to show you an example that with all of these exposures to the younger generation, they are more than likely prone to get started. I am very sad to see that this is the trait that is being passed down by my family generation and I am sure there are multiple of families out there who is experiencing the same situation or worse.

This ordinance is very important to me. This ordinance does not only benefit me but our future generation of Saint Paul. It is the protection of our children and grandchildren who will be living in this city. Your community is counting on you, I hope you take my story into consideration before you make the final decision.

Thank you,

Hlee Luna Yang

Public Health Major, St. Catherine University ' 18

Dear Councilman Dai Thao of Ward 1,

As a St. Paul resident who grew up and lives in your ward, I ask you to support the ordinance to restrict the sale of menthol tobacco to adult-only tobacco shops in St. Paul.

Tobacco is the single-greatest, preventable source of death and disease among racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. Tobacco companies continue to target communities of color (including our Hmong communities and Black communities) and, in particular, youth with menthol and other flavor additives.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly all tobacco use begins during youth and progresses during young adulthood.

Please support in protecting our youths and our communities of color.

Thank you for your time and support!

All the best,

Pa Xiong Vang, BS, CHES

James – Would like to see age raised to 21, instead of banning. You're only moving the problem and it will hurt businesses

Ruth – You're putting business owners out and its discriminatory like telling people they can't eat chocolate.
