



## HMONG VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER

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September 22, 2017

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

Dear Members of the Council,

As an owner and shareholder of the Hmong Village Shopping Center, a local shopping center catering services to the Hmong and other minority communities on the east side of St. Paul, located at 1001 Johnson Park Way, St. Paul, MN; I am concerned about the plan to conduct listening sessions throughout the City to consider banning various food service materials including Polystyrene foam. The banning idea will harm our local businesses such as restaurants and other food service businesses in general.

Hmong Village Shopping Center houses hundreds of retail vendors and many of them are specialty groceries and kitchens. Our vendors are small family owned business. They work very hard, most of the time long hours, and the profit margin is very small. A ban, in any form would have a negative economic effect on these kitchens and grocery stores, and other businesses and institutions in the City.

Many Hmong restaurant and grocery store owners in the St. Paul area who utilize Polystyrene foam prefer it to alternatives for its cost-effectiveness and its durability. If foam were banned in St. Paul, it would have to be replaced with more expensive alternatives that are just not as dependable. As a result, restaurant and small businesses owners would either have to pay up for more expensive products or increase prices for their customers.


There is a much more feasible alternative to banning polystyrene foam. Focusing the efforts on recycling the material rather than banning it is much more productive. Polystyrene foam is already recycled in areas all across the country and recycled polystyrene is used in products like smoke detectors, surfboards, rulers, crown molding, and garden nursery trays. And, as a thermoplastic, polystyrene foam can be recycled many times over.

As a business leader, I feel it is imperative that you consider shifting the focus from a ban to the logical alternative to recycling.

Attached is a signature sheet of all businesses housed inside the Hmong Village Shopping Center.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Yong Yia Vang  
CEO