

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

RECEIVED  
OCT 11 2021  
CITY CLERK

RE: File #: Ord 21-29, **Version:** 1

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

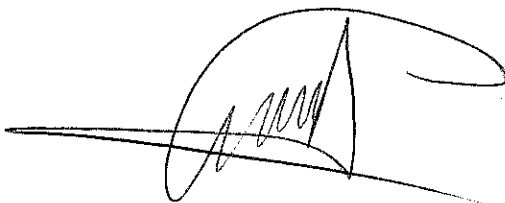
This proposed tobacco ordinance is a gross overreach by the St. Paul City Council. The city council should not be able to dictate the price of a pack of cigarettes before tax. This proposal will essentially create a black market for tobacco products in the St. Paul community.

The purpose of this bill is to reduce smoking in St. Paul, but the intention is misguided. Simply raising the cost of cigarettes is not an effective deterrent to smoking, though it may lead to a reduction in tobacco purchases in that jurisdiction, this is not the whole picture. If you raise the price of cigarettes to an unaffordable point, the consumer will start looking for alternative ways to purchase these products. People will purchase these products outside of St. Paul city limits or turn to black market dealers. Either way, my store will lose a valuable source of income and the city will lose out on the tax benefits from tobacco purchases.

If the city council would like to reduce smoking in St. Paul, they must find another way, one that won't result in as many consequences. I would love to work with the city to find a way to accomplish this mission for everyone's benefit!

Thank you for considering,

MINNI MARKET TOBACCO  
2019. Minnehaha Ave E

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Minni Market Tobacco', written over a horizontal line.

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

RE: File #: Ord 21-29, **Version:** 1

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

As a small business owner, I am very concerned with the proposed price and regulatory changes that the city council is proposing. These changes are going to hurt my business and this community. This misguided policy will not result in less smoking; it will result in more smuggling and less business for St. Paul convenience store owners like myself. We have seen this before here in Minnesota, and around the country, that price hikes and product bans do not lower tobacco usage.

The passage of this ordinance will cause my customers to drive outside of the city limits of St. Paul in search of better prices for tobacco products. Worse, it will likely increase the smuggling of tobacco, which a recent report found is already responsible for 36% of cigarettes in Minnesota. That means less business for me and less tax revenue for the city in a time that has already proven difficult due to the pandemic and poor economic conditions our community has faced.

This ordinance is not in the best interests of our community. It won't work for businesses, worsens illegal smuggling, and will not achieve the goals it is seeking. Instead, the city should focus on smoking cessation programs and other educational opportunities for folks who want to quit smoking. For the good of the community, I urge you all not to allow this ordinance to go into effect.

Thank you,

Tobacco  
UP IN Smoke ~~Tobacco~~ shop. LLC.  
2259 Minnehaha Ave E.  
Maplewood mn 55119  
Carmen Garcia

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
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RE: File #: Ord 21-29, **Version:** 1

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

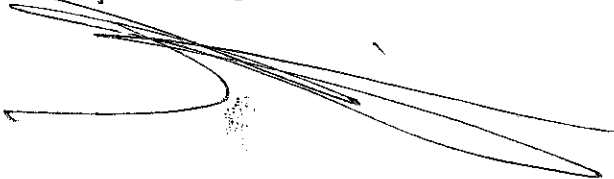
I received a notice in the mail notifying me of a proposed tobacco ordinance that would raise the cost of cigarettes, snuff, and snus to \$10 minimum and would outlaw the use of vouchers. This ordinance will put undue stress on my business as I am starting to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

If this ordinance passes, my customers will start purchasing their tobacco products in other jurisdictions where the price is significantly cheaper. Duluth stores witnessed this when they banned flavored tobacco products, and the surrounding areas saw an increase in sales. If customers didn't want to travel to Wisconsin, they may be more apt to purchase such products from illicit dealers. This bill will succeed in its original goal, but it will severely affect my business due to the loss of tobacco sales and subsequent sales that come with it.

I am asking you as members of the St. Paul City Council, please vote against this proposed ordinance to protect our business community and keep our neighborhoods safe!

Sincerely,

Abdalla T. Basi  
809 Solby Ave

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abdalla T. Basi', written over a horizontal line.

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
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RE: File #: Ord 21-29, **Version: 1**

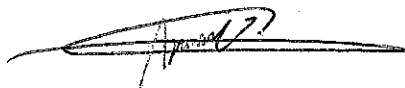
Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

I'm an owner of a local convenience store and am writing in strong opposition to the proposed tobacco ordinance that the Council is considering. This policy will hurt small businesses like mine and have no impact on smoking in our city. A price floor of \$10 and limited licenses will not do anything more than drive customers away from local businesses and shops.

When cities enact ordinances like this, customers simply drive to areas where tobacco costs less or opt to buy smuggled tobacco products instead. After Duluth enacted a ban on menthol cigarettes, tobacco sales in surrounding communities soared. We have seen similar occurrences around the country in places like Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, where tobacco bans and price hikes have been a boon for smugglers. This ordinance will not lower rates of smoking. However, it will lower city tax revenues, increase smuggling, and harm small businesses.

This is not the right policy for my business or this community. If the city council wants to make a difference in the battle to lower smoking rates, the city should explore expanding anti-smoking campaigns that help educate and guide people who want to quit. For all the small business owners and operators like me, I ask that you all vote against this ordinance.

Thank you for considering,



*East Market Grocery and tobacco*

*913 Payne Ave*

*St. Paul, MN 55130*

*Abass Alogla*

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

I am deeply disturbed by your tobacco ordinance, which will raise the cost of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products to \$10 before tax. With tax, these products will be nearly \$16. I am confused by the purpose of this bill because it seems like the goal is to reduce smoking in St. Paul, but there are multiple instances in which the price does not reduce tobacco use.

Instead of raising the price of tobacco products, fund cessation programs. These programs will help consumers quit, rather than pushing them to buy these products outside of city or state limits. If these products are purchased elsewhere it will hurt my bottom line, and it will take much-needed tax income from the city. The current tax income from cigarettes can help fund our deeply underfunded police department or help fund cessation programs.

Please consider other ways to increase smoking cessation levels in St. Paul that won't have adverse effects on our community.

Sincerely,

Bhupinder Sandhu  
Town mart  
1980 Still water Ave E  
St. Paul. MN. 55119.

October 7, 2021

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Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
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Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
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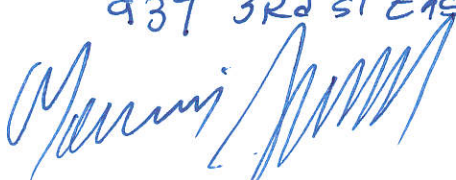
Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

As a local small business owner who has struggled enough in the past year, I am extremely disappointed to hear about the new tobacco ordinance you are proposing. The ordinance would raise the price of a pack of cigarettes to at least \$10—almost \$16 after you factor in taxes. This is an outrageous price hike that I will not be profiting from as an owner.

Raising the price of tobacco in St. Paul will do nothing but increase the commute for customers who buy tobacco products. This ordinance will encourage my loyal customers to turn to my competitors in Minneapolis, or Eagan, or any other city in Minnesota where products are cheaper. This exact thing happened when Duluth banned menthol cigarettes. Yes, sales went down in Duluth but instead increased in the surrounding areas. You will take away my livelihood and force my customers to take their business elsewhere, contributing to tax revenue, outside of the city which we will never see reinvested in our community.

With the pandemic, I'm struggling enough as is. I cannot afford the increased stress that this insane price hike will cost me. I understand the goal is to reduce tobacco use among teens and encourage adults to quit. But this ordinance will only have negative implications for our local economy and penalize dependency among existing users more than avoiding dependency in the first place. As a citizen and constituent in St. Paul, I ask you not to support this ordinance.

Thank you for considering,

3RD STREET TOBACCO  
937 3RD ST EAST 55106  
MN  


October 7, 2021

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Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
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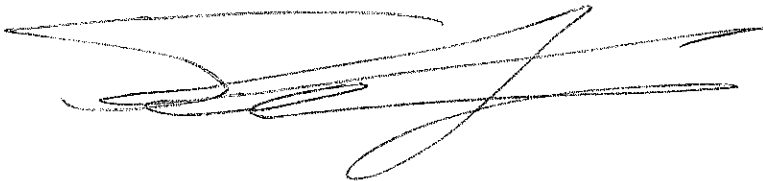
Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

I am writing as a concerned citizen and local business owner, whose business you are about to hurt because of the new tobacco ordinance. The ordinance will raise the minimum price of a pack of cigarettes to \$10 in St. Paul. Considering that the average price currently is around \$8, this is a significant uptick in prices—even more so when you factor in taxes.

I know the purpose of this ordinance is to deter people from smoking, but tobacco taxes are already so high that anyone who is still regularly smoking already has a strong dependency and preference toward it. An even higher tax rate will not discourage consumers from smoking any more than the already existing tax rate. With this being merely a city ordinance, my customers will travel outside of St. Paul to buy their tobacco products, effectively removing the taxable income intended for our city. You are then not accomplishing the goal of this ordinance and instead hurting the livelihood and business of the local community.

This ordinance will do more harm than good for both business owners like myself and consumers. This price hike will disproportionately affect lower-income individuals who use tobacco products at a higher rate. As for the hardworking business owners like myself whose businesses have struggled enough during the pandemic, I fear this ordinance will be the final nail in the coffin. So please, find some other way to reduce smoking in teens. Hurting St. Paul's economy is not the right way.

Sincerely,



Adam S Ford & Fuel  
1390 E 3<sup>rd</sup> St. St. Paul 55106

October 7, 2021

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Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince


Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

I am very concerned about your proposed tobacco ordinance, which aims to raise the minimum price for cigarettes and other smokeless tobacco to \$10 before tax. This bill will severely impact my business as many of my sales come from tobacco products. If this bill becomes a law, it will disproportionately affect lower-income individuals since who use these products at a higher rate.

Along with losing sales from tobacco, I will lose the sales from products people also purchase when they come in for their tobacco products. The consequences this ordinance will have on my store are unimaginable. I wouldn't be surprised if I needed to let some of my employees go to make up for the lost revenue.

Now that you've heard about the effects this bill will have on your small business owners, I hope you reconsider your stance on this ordinance as it will severely affect me, my family and my business. Please vote against the proposed ordinance!

Sincerely,



Jorge Sampedro Zelanya  
Suncray RR  
344 Ruth Street.  
St Paul, MN 55119



October 7, 2021

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Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

As a gas station owner in St. Paul, I am shocked by the proposed tobacco ordinance, I shouldn't be, you have already banned the sale of menthol and raised the price to purchase to 2.

Much of my revenue comes from tobacco sales and if you raise the price and take away coupon options, that revenue will likely go to a black market. In turn, you will be hurting my business while also fueling an illicit market, all while not fixing the problem. You will not get people to stop using tobacco products with this ordinance. We already keep these products out of the hands of minors, how much more can you do to us with these punitive ordinances?

If it passes, this will have a significant impact on my business and my community. I am asking that you please think twice before moving forward with this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Tariq Obeid  
Phoenix market  
685 E. 3RD St.  
St. Paul, MN 55106

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

Thank you for your continued leadership of our great city. I am writing to you today to talk about the proposed tobacco ordinance that is being introduced.


As an adult who buys tobacco products, I am responsible for myself. Consequently, I think if you are trying to eradicate or diminish tobacco use in the city, this is the wrong way to do it.

This ordinance punishes the people who can least afford it and we will drive sales somewhere else, whether that be on the black market or a quick drive to Hudson. Either way, it serves no benefit to the city. If this ordinance won't accomplish its goal, then it has no business becoming a law.

I hope you will reconsider the punitive damage you are leveling on locally owned businesses who are struggling from high property taxes and outrageous regulations already levied on their businesses.

Please reconsider.

Thank you,

  
AS  
255 Maria Ave  
St. Paul

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

If the goal of the most recent tobacco ordinance is to reduce smoking levels, it will fail. Raising the cost of tobacco products is not an effective way to reduce the number of smokers. This policy will not improve public health and safety, it will harm it.

The price of cigarettes has never proven to be a deterrent to smokers. We still find ways to purchase these products. If St. Paul follows through with its proposed plan to raise the minimum price of cigarettes to \$10 per pack, the number of smokers will stay relatively the same, the illicit market for tobacco will grow, and the city will lose valuable tax dollars from cigarette purchases. I would rather continue buying my tobacco products from licensed and respected members of our community to ensure the highest standard of products.

Please don't raise the price of cigarettes and chew to \$10. It will do more harm than good. I know you have the right intentions, but this is not the way to get people to stop smoking. You have already banned the sale of flavored products and raised the age to purchase to 21, let adults make adult decisions and stop trying to manage everyone's lives.

Thank you for reading.

Pa Vang  
978 Euclid St. #B  
St. Paul MN 55106

October 7, 2021

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Council President Amy Brendmoen  
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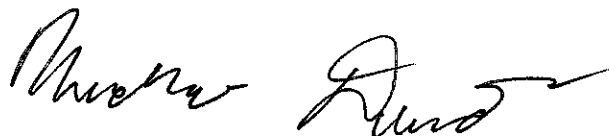
Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

City Councilors, I am writing to ask you not to support the new ordinance, which would raise tobacco prices to an outrageous \$10 a pack minimum. After-tax, you are asking me to pay nearly \$16 for a single pack. My paychecks were already stretched thin before the pandemic, and now you're adding this on top of it? Who are you trying to help, and at whose expense?

I urge you to rethink the effect this rule will have on everyday people. What's meant to be an ordinance to decrease smoking, will, in reality, turn into an order to make the least fortunate among us even worse off. Those who smoke are already struggling as it is, and this ordinance will disproportionately affect them even more.

This ordinance will hurt the people it is aiming to save more than it will help. By approving this ordinance, you are punishing the people who are dependent and voluntarily buying these products. Please do not vote for this ordinance.

Sincerely,



9777 19<sup>th</sup> St Forest Lake

October 7, 2021

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Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
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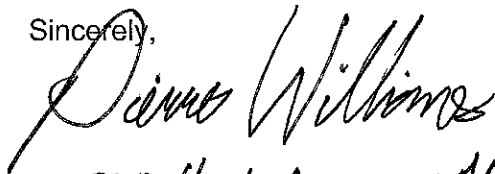
Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

I am writing to you in opposition to the proposed ordinance regarding tobacco product prices. I've read this will set the base price at \$10 and effectively \$16 after taxes. This price hike is a ridiculous policy that will only harm people.

I work very hard every week, and I deserve to spend that money any way I want. The city should not be making it harder for me to pay my bills at the end of the month or feed my family. These price hikes will hurt me and other members of our neighborhood, and I think the city council should keep that in mind as you consider this new law.

The City Council should be working to make it easier to live in the city, not harder. There are better ways to help people quit smoking that doesn't involve price and tax hikes. This is the wrong choice for St. Paul and the wrong choice for people like me. I am asking you to vote no on this ordinance for hard-working people like me!

Sincerely,



208 Hoyt Ave W #104 St. Paul 55117.

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
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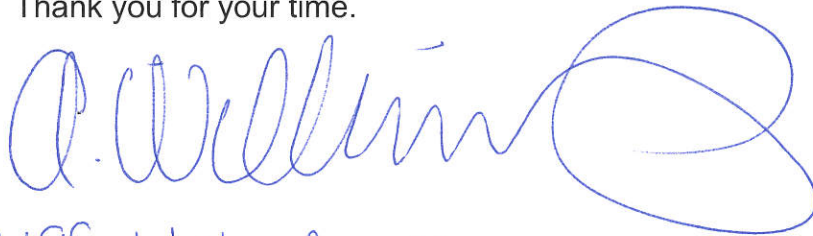
Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

I have lived in St. Paul my entire life, I shouldn't be surprised that the city council is considering passing yet another tobacco ordinance.

I am a smoker, so I know that I am biased, but this won't get people to stop smoking. The ordinance will only make people take their hard-earned money to Oakdale or Woodbury or Hudson. The loss of tax revenue that the city desperately needs heads out of town too all at a time when you are proposing an 11% property tax increase. Your ordinances and taxes are driving people out of the city I love.

Punitive taxes and limiting businesses doesn't work. Please don't pass this ordinance.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Williams', followed by a large, stylized flourish.

488 Idaho Ave E  
Saint Paul, MN 55130

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:


I am writing as a concerned citizen from St. Paul about the proposed city ordinance that would raise the minimum price of tobacco to \$10 per pack. I am worried about the black-market activity that would come to our area as a result of this ordinance. Tobacco is addictive, so I understand the intent behind the ordinance. However, I am concerned that an underground economy would emerge to offer lower prices than what people can legally pay in St. Paul.

If you think there's an issue with the black market now, wait until you make tobacco products so irrationally expensive that more people will turn to the black market for what they used to buy safely down the block. Our community would encourage criminal activity as a direct response to this law.

Who is going to enforce the rise in smuggling and black-market sales? Surely not the police who are already stretched to their limit because of reduced budgets and shrinking staffs. We need to focus on avoiding unnecessary interactions between the community and law enforcement, and this ordinance will result in an uptick in criminal activity.

I urge the city council to reconsider this ordinance and the negative repercussions it would have on our community. This ordinance has the potential to do more harm than good, and I urge you to thoroughly consider the ways in which this will hurt families and the community.

Thank you,

  
945 Algonquin Ave.  
55104

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

I am gravely concerned about the proposed tobacco ordinance that would create a minimum price on tobacco products. This type of ordinance is regressive and will target lower-income Minnesotans. Nearly a quarter of Americans with an income less than \$35,000 annually use cigarettes. Yet only 7% of Americans with an income greater than \$100,000 use these same products, according to the CDC. This ordinance will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable members of our community.

This bill is unlikely to accomplish its goal of reducing smoking, you've already raised the age to purchase to 21 and banned the sale of menthol products, how have those ordinances worked out so far? Local ordinances like this don't work because consumers can drive to other suburbs and purchase these products elsewhere.

This ordinance has severe consequences with minimal upside. Please oppose this ordinance.

Thank you for considering.



2204 W, 7<sup>th</sup> St,  
St. Paul, MN 55114



October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

I found the recently proposed ordinance from the St. Paul Council to raise the price of tobacco products to be outrageous. Raising the price of tobacco products like cigarettes to a minimum of \$10 before tax is way too expensive. Prices are already borderline too high, and when you include the new minimum and taxes, you'll get to way over \$15 for a pack of cigarettes.

These prices are going to be hard for a lot of people to absorb into their monthly budgets, and it's going to be the poorest people who suffer the most under these new rules. I have already had to work harder during these last few years, and these new prices are going to put a real squeeze on my budget. It is very unfair.

These prices are wrong for St. Paul and are going to hurt a lot of people for their own choices. The city should invest in smoking cessation programs for residents who want to quit rather than punish everyone with price increases. I am asking you all to vote against this proposed ordinance.

Sincerely,

Stanley S. Bill  
215 Old 6<sup>th</sup> St W

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
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Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

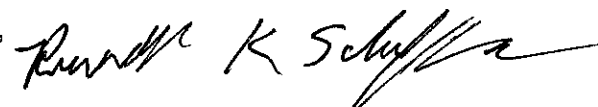
I've smoked for most of my entire adult life, and I never thought that the price for a pack of cigarettes would ever reach \$10. With tax included, the cost of my cigarettes will be upwards of \$16. I'm not sure if the goal of this ordinance is to reduce kids' access to these products or what it is, but I can tell you it will hurt hardworking citizens.

I understand the need to make sure kids don't start smoking tobacco, but this ordinance is not the way to accomplish that. This ordinance will only convince a minority of smokers to quit, and that won't outweigh the unintended consequences it will have.

For the people who choose not to quit, they will either start purchasing their products in Wisconsin, where the price is cheaper, or turn to the black market with little to no regulation. Both options are bad for the city because they will cause a loss of tax revenue on an already stressed budget.

Stop raising taxes, reign in your spending, and please vote against this ordinance. It's not sensible to pass a law that will have so many negative effects on small businesses.

Thank you,

  
295 Goodhue St  
St. Paul

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

As a member of the St. Paul community and constituent of this council, I am very concerned about the new city ordinance that would raise the price of tobacco to at least \$10 per pack. This is an absurd price hike that will only serve to harm current customers more than help.

Not only will this ordinance directly harm customers, but it will also harm the community and city. People will stop buying tobacco in St. Paul and buy it in any of the neighboring cities. Any tax revenue that St. Paul had been making off tobacco sales will disappear, making our already sparse city budget even thinner.

The few customers who will still buy tobacco within city limits will bear a significant financial burden, which will disproportionately affect low-income individuals. As elected officials, it is your job to improve the lives of your constituents, and yet you are considering an ordinance that will do the exact opposite. In passing this ordinance, you will be limiting tax revenue that benefits the entirety of St. Paul by making those less fortunate even worse off. For the sake of the community, do not pass this ordinance.

Sincerely,

*Shirley Ellsper*  
1027 Juno Ave  
St. Paul MN.

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
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Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

As a member of the St. Paul community, I am outraged at the new tobacco ordinance and the city's goal of raising the minimum price of a pack of cigarettes to \$10. A base price of \$10 for a pack of cigarettes is expensive enough, but when you factor in the cost of taxes, the total price will be around \$16.

We have been through enough with the ongoing pandemic and how it is affecting the economy. My paychecks are already stretched thin enough as it is. Paying over \$16 for a pack of cigarettes will make it too hard to make my paychecks last the whole two weeks.

Instead of raising the costs of these products that we can freely use, the city council should consider funding smoking cessation programs for citizens wanting to quit. It's not fair to punish a whole community and essentially price out lower-income citizens from using tobacco products. Please vote against this ordinance!

Thank you for considering.

Sincerely,

James Whit  
2245 Knapp St  
St Paul MN 55108

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

As a citizen of the St. Paul community, I am disappointed to hear that the city council is considering a substantial price and tax increase for cigarettes and other tobacco products. The city council needs to stay focused on helping St. Paul residents, not making it more expensive for us to live here.

With the way the economy has been and the pandemic still raging on, I can't afford a base price of \$10. With taxes, that is \$15! This increase is insane, and it helps no one. It's just another price increase that will affect low-income folks the most and make it harder for them to pay their bills. It is remarkably unfair.

If the city council wanted to help smokers quit, they should create programs that help people who want to quit. There is no reason struggling folks should have to bear this burden for a personal and legal choice. Raising the price of these products is a mistake that will hurt many people. I encourage every member of the city council to vote no on the proposed ordinance.

Sincerely,

*Karen Markey*  
*1394 Jackson St.*  
*St. Paul, MN*  
*55117*

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

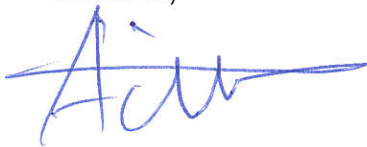
I am extremely disappointed to hear about the proposed city ordinance to raise the price of cigarettes to at least \$10 a pack. As someone who smokes regularly and voluntarily spends a decent part of my income on cigarettes, this will hurt and until I choose to quit, your ordinance will do little to encourage me to stop.

Is there not already a high enough tax on these products to discourage tobacco use? The people still buying cigarettes at this price want to and will continue to buy them regardless. This ordinance will do nothing to prevent people from buying tobacco but will hurt people already dependent on it. President Biden promised not to raise taxes on those making less than \$400,000 a year, but this tax hike on cigarettes will be a burden on those well below that.

There are better ways to prevent tobacco use than punishing the entire community of people who use it. What about funding programs to help people who want to quit? I have been buying cigarettes for a while and will continue to until I decide to quit. But until then, don't punish me for using a product I have the right to use. Please vote against this ordinance!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'A. Carter', written over a horizontal line.

191 Western Avenue St. Paul, MN 55102  
AA Tobacco

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

As a resident of St. Paul, the new tobacco ordinance being considered is an overreach by this council. If you raise the price of a pack of cigarettes to \$10, it will mean, that with taxes, the new overall price per pack would be around \$16. You won't get people to stop smoking and using tobacco products but what you will do is create a black market as you see now in New York.

This ordinance will disproportionately affect lower-income people because this group is nearly three times more likely to smoke. For these reasons and more, please oppose this ordinance!

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin Mueller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

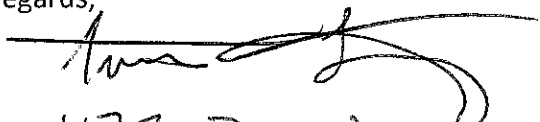
Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

The citizens of St. Paul are still feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have lost our jobs, had trouble paying our bills, and even lost people due to the virus. Despite all of this, the council is still proposing an ordinance to raise the minimum purchase price of most tobacco products to \$10. With taxes, we will be paying upwards of \$18. We shouldn't have to pay over double the price for a pack of cigarettes, especially with the ongoing pandemic.

A pandemic is a time to come together, not divide the community. This ordinance will put an unnecessary burden on members of our community who choose to use tobacco products. Rather than punishing these individuals, we should be trying to help them. Raising the cost of cigarettes will introduce more blackmarket tobacco products into our community, making our community even less safe.

City council members, your proposed ordinance will have little benefit on the citizens of St. Paul while bringing new consequences. For these reasons, I ask that you please oppose this ordinance.

Best regards,



477 Bodnar St. Saint Paul MN 55102



October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

St. Paul City Councilors, I am writing to ask that you vote no on the proposed city ordinance. It is entirely unfair that the city is considering raising the minimum price for cigarette packs to \$10. That does not even include taxes which will add a couple of bucks on top of that. I shouldn't be financially punished for choosing to smoke.

The ensuing pandemic and the economic hardships some people are going through are hard enough without our city imposing unnecessary price hikes on us. I don't know how folks are supposed to fit these price increases into already tight budgets, I know they'll affect mine.

Instead of punishing hard-working folks like me for using a legal product, the city council should seek other solutions to help those who want to quit smoking. Funding a program that helps people quit smoking makes a lot more sense than passing laws that disproportionately harm low-income people and families by making their lives more expensive. Please vote no on this proposed ordinance.

Thank you,

Roberto Zeimet 279 Erie St.  
St. Paul

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

It has come to my attention you all are considering raising the minimum price for a pack of cigarettes to \$10. This policy is regressive because it will disproportionately affect St. Paul's most vulnerable populations. Ten dollars plus the cost of taxes will bring cigarettes to over \$16, which is too much for individuals living paycheck to paycheck.

If the goal of this bill is to reduce the rates of smoking in St. Paul, it won't work. Given St. Paul's proximity to Wisconsin, smokers, including myself, will travel over the border to purchase cheaper cigarettes and give that tax to Wisconsin. Rather than force the tax income from cigarettes to a different state through bad policy, you should focus on using taxes from cigarettes and tobacco to fund useful smoking cessation programs.

I urge the city council to think long and hard about the adverse effects this bill will have on St. Paul citizens and the city's economy. Voting for this ordinance will adversely affect St. Paul.

Robert Zeimet  
279 Erie St St. Paul

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

I am very upset to hear the City Council is considering a law, which would increase the minimum price for cigarettes. As a resident who buys tobacco, I feel that this policy is not in line with the priorities and interests of our community. I have heard that this will make a single pack of cigarettes cost \$16, which is absurdly high.

This policy will force St. Paul residents, including me, to go outside city limits for tobacco products or pay outrageous prices for a legal product that I have freely chosen to use. If the council wants to help people who want to quit smoking, that's great, but the city shouldn't punish me for my choice. No one benefits from me having less money in my pocket or driving outside of St. Paul to buy tobacco products for cheaper. At least no one in this city.

I encourage you all to vote no on this proposed law. I know I've already struggled this last year during the pandemic, and the city council making things more expensive will not help me or anyone else I know. It is the wrong choice for St. Paul.

Sincerely,

Stephan Smith  
971 Juno Ave  
Saint Paul MN 55102

October 7, 2021

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

I wanted to write to you today regarding the tobacco ordinance, because I believe you should oppose it. I understand the motive behind the ordinance, but I don't believe it will achieve the outcome you are looking for. People are going to use tobacco products regardless of how high a tax you impose. Also, if it passes, there will be many unintended consequences, including the shattering of small business profits, increased taxation of low-income Americans, and the probable creation of a thriving illegal tobacco market in St. Paul similar to what is happening in other cities and states.

For these reasons, I ask that you please oppose the ordinance!

Sincerely,

*Pilar De Leon*  
*187 Arlington Ave East*  
*St Paul MN 55117*

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

RE: File #: Ord 21-29, **Version:** 1

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

As a member of the St. Paul community, I am outraged at the new tobacco ordinance and the city's goal of raising the minimum price of a pack of cigarettes to \$10. A base price of \$10 for a pack of cigarettes is expensive enough, but when you factor in the cost of taxes, the total price will be around \$16.

We have been through enough with the ongoing pandemic and how it is affecting the economy. My paychecks are already stretched thin enough as it is. Paying over \$16 for a pack of cigarettes will make it too hard to make my paychecks last the whole two weeks.

Instead of raising the costs of these products that we can freely use, the city council should consider funding smoking cessation programs for citizens wanting to quit. It's not fair to punish a whole community and essentially price out lower-income citizens from using tobacco products. Please vote against this ordinance!

Thank you for considering.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name, possibly "J. Carter", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

RE: File #: Ord 21-29, **Version:** 1

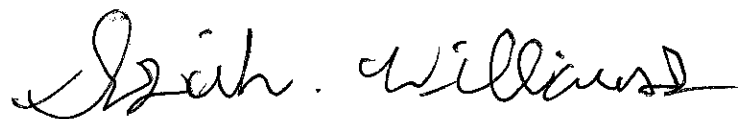
Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

As a citizen of the St. Paul community, I am disappointed to hear that the city council is considering a substantial price and tax increase for cigarettes and other tobacco products. The city council needs to stay focused on helping St. Paul residents, not making it more expensive for us to live here.

With the way the economy has been and the pandemic still raging on, I can't afford a base price of \$10. With taxes, that is \$15! This increase is insane, and it helps no one. It's just another price increase that will affect low-income folks the most and make it harder for them to pay their bills. It is remarkably unfair.

If the city council wanted to help smokers quit, they should create programs that help people who want to quit. There is no reason struggling folks should have to bear this burden for a personal and legal choice. Raising the price of these products is a mistake that will hurt many people. I encourage every member of the city council to vote no on the proposed ordinance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

RE: File #: Ord 21-29, **Version:** 1

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

If the goal of the most recent tobacco ordinance is to reduce smoking levels, it will fail. Raising the cost of tobacco products is not an effective way to reduce the number of smokers. This policy will not improve public health and safety, it will harm it.

The price of cigarettes has never proven to be a deterrent to smokers. We still find ways to purchase these products. If St. Paul follows through with its proposed plan to raise the minimum price of cigarettes to \$10 per pack, the number of smokers will stay relatively the same, the illicit market for tobacco will grow, and the city will lose valuable tax dollars from cigarette purchases. I would rather continue buying my tobacco products from licensed and respected members of our community to ensure the highest standard of products.

Please don't raise the price of cigarettes and chew to \$10. It will do more harm than good. I know you have the right intentions, but this is not the way to get people to stop smoking. You have already banned the sale of flavored products and raised the age to purchase to 21, let adults make adult decisions and stop trying to manage everyone's lives.

Thank you for reading.

Robin R. Pipkin  
Robin R. Pipkin

Mayor Melvin Carter  
Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Councilmember Dai Thao  
Councilmember Rebecca Noecker  
Councilmember Chris Tolbert  
Councilmember Mitra Jalali  
Councilmember Nelsi Yang  
Councilmember Jane Prince

RE: File #: Ord 21-29, **Version:** 1

Dear Mayor Carter and City Councilmembers:

I am writing to you in opposition to the proposed ordinance regarding tobacco product prices. I've read this will set the base price at \$10 and effectively \$16 after taxes. This price hike is a ridiculous policy that will only harm people.

I work very hard every week, and I deserve to spend that money any way I want. The city should not be making it harder for me to pay my bills at the end of the month or feed my family. These price hikes will hurt me and other members of our neighborhood, and I think the city council should keep that in mind as you consider this new law.

The City Council should be working to make it easier to live in the city, not harder. There are better ways to help people quit smoking that doesn't involve price and tax hikes. This is the wrong choice for St. Paul and the wrong choice for people like me. I am asking you to vote no on this ordinance for hard-working people like me!

Sincerely,

Diane Woods  
Diane Woods