



October 15, 2021

Council President Amy Brendmoen and Saint Paul City Council Members
15 Kellogg Blvd. West, City Hall
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Dear President Amy Brendmoen and Saint Paul City Council Members:

On behalf of ClearWay Minnesota, thank you for considering updates to improve St. Paul's tobacco ordinances. We urge you to end tobacco price discounting, set minimum prices for cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, and increase retailer penalties for selling tobacco products to minors. Together, these measures will improve health for St. Paul residents, including youth, LGBTQ and Black, Indigenous and other communities targeted by the tobacco industry's marketing.

Decades of evidence shows that increasing the price of cigarettes is the number-one way to help adults quit and prevent kids from ever smoking. It is also well-known that the tobacco industry uses price promotions to target Black, Indigenous, LGBTQ and people of color. Increasing the price of tobacco products is highly effective at decreasing tobacco use, especially among youth and low-income smokers. Price increases also help current users quit smoking.

The tobacco industry spends more than \$100 million a year marketing their products in Minnesota, and much of that spending comes in the form of price discounting. Unfortunately, these tactics are working. In the past year, half of Minnesota smokers have used tobacco coupons or promotions and one-third of adult smokers use tobacco discounts every time they see one.

We must continue to safeguard health while holding Big Tobacco and retailers accountable. These tobacco ordinance updates will complement St. Paul's work to end tobacco's harms and reduce youth addiction including raising the tobacco age to 21, restricting the sale of flavored tobacco products and capping tobacco licenses.

The COVID-19 pandemic and youth tobacco epidemic demonstrate that we must do more to advance lung health and prevent addiction. The 2020 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey found that one in five high-school students reported using e-cigarettes and more teens are heavy e-cigarette users. Perhaps most troubling, 7 in 10 youth who use e-cigarettes show one or more signs of nicotine dependence.

When we stop youth tobacco addiction and help adults quit, we prevent future disease and death and reduce health care costs. Thank you for making St. Paul a leader in this lifesaving work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Willoughby".

David J. Willoughby, M.A.
Chief Executive Officer
ClearWay MinnesotaSM