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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

2019 SEP 20 AM 7:59

CITY CLERK

BY _____
DEPUTY _____

Council President Herb Wesson
LA City Council
200 N. Spring Street
Room 430
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council File: 18-1104, Flavored Tobacco Products

Dear Councilmember Wesson:

I don't understand why anyone would want the City Council to adopt a total ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products like dip and cigars. When it comes to legal products, adults should be free to choose the products they purchase, and Los Angeles retailers should not be penalized for selling those products.

We have a store that sells flavored tobacco products to adults 21+. Losing a significant portion of adult customers could devastate our business, but it's even more concerning to think about the black market that would spring up after a ban is in place. Responsible retailers, like myself, are on the front lines of conducting ID checks to enforce 21 as the legal age to purchase tobacco products. We are committed to ensuring that these products aren't sold to anyone underage. Illegal sellers would not care about checking IDs, and this could have dangerous consequences for our community.

For these reasons, I urge you: please do not move forward with a sales ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products.

Thank you,

Jakela Cobbs
West Coast Son, LLC
DBA Blaghayusnotto
11671 Victory Blvd
North Hollywood, CA 91606

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Re: Council File: 18-1104, Flavored Tobacco Products

Dear Council President Wesson,

I appreciate the City Council's service to our community, but I think they would be doing us a disservice by banning the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products. These are legal products: adults should have the right to buy them and L.A. stores should have the right to sell them.

A flavor ban wouldn't mean the end of smoking in the city, it would just drive the sales of those products to stores outside city limits or to unlicensed and potentially illegal sellers in our neighborhoods. An increase in illegal sales would be especially harmful, as we all know they would not include ID checks for underage buyers.

A ban would hurt small local businesses and it could increase the number of black market dealers selling the banned products. Please don't move forward with a flavor ban.

Thank you,

Smoke & Vape
19321 Victory Blvd
Tarzana, CA, 91335

Ramy Hatoum

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Council President Herb Wesson
LA City Council
200 N. Spring Street
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Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council File: 18-1104, Flavored Tobacco Products

Dear Council President Wesson:

Adult Angelinos should have the right to purchase legal products from licensed retailers in the city of Los Angeles. A ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products, like dip and cigars, would stop legitimate sales of those items, inconveniencing adult customers and shortchanging retailers.

In California, the legal age to purchase tobacco products is already 21. Responsible retailers in Los Angeles are committed to keeping these products from getting into kids' hands by conducting ID checks at the point of sale. However, if adult customers cannot purchase their preferred tobacco products from responsible retailers, they could be driven to illegal sources that do not check IDs. Thus, a flavor ban could have dangerous consequences for our community.

Let Los Angeles adults make their own decisions about smoking and using smokeless tobacco, and let tax-paying, law-abiding shopkeepers earn a living. Please keep this in consideration and do not move forward with a broad ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco.

Thank you,

HERMITAGE SMOKE & VAPE

ASTGHIK VARDAN YAN

12041 RIVERSIDE DR.

VALLEY VILLAGE, CA 91607

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Council President Herb Wesson
LA City Council
200 N. Spring Street
Room 430
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council File: 18-1104, Flavored Tobacco Products

Dear Council President Wesson:

A ban on the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products in the city of Los Angeles could have serious unintended consequences. City Council members who support such a broad ban should rethink their positions.

As we've seen with alcohol and cannabis, the prohibition of products for adults doesn't work—it never has and it never will. It goes against the liberty that our country stands for.

Worse yet, prohibition could drive the sale of the newly prohibited products underground, into the hands of criminals.

We don't want to see tobacco sales in the city give way to a black market. Reasonable regulation makes sense, but an all-out ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco like dip and cigars would have dangerous consequences. Please do not move forward with a broad ban on flavored tobacco products.

Thank you,

Grigor Gukasyan
5407 Lexington Ave #5
Los Angeles CA, 90029
(702) 981-4884

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Council President Herb Wesson
LA City Council
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Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Council File: 18-1104, Flavored Tobacco Products

Dear Mr. Wesson,

The Los Angeles City Council should not consider a ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products. These are legal products that can only be sold to adults age 21 or older.

As a tobacco retailer, I am fully licensed and uphold the laws regarding tobacco transactions. I check IDs to make sure no one underage buys these products.

If the city imposes a broad ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco, there would be no such assurance. Illegal sales of banned products could create a black market where sellers care nothing for licenses or rules regarding the sales of products to young people.

For the city of Los Angeles, the present system can work without bringing the negative, unintended consequences of a menthol cigarette and tobacco flavor ban.

I respectfully ask that you do not move forward with a ban.

Thank you,


1100 N. Western AVE.
LA CA 90029
George McElroy

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Council President Herb Wesson
LA City Council
200 N. Spring Street
Room 430
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Vote NO on Flavored Tobacco Ban

Dear Mr. Wesson:

I am a licensed tobacco retailer in Los Angeles and I oppose the flavored tobacco ban. Banning products leads to black market activity and has created a public health crisis. Below are some excerpts from an August 2019 New York Times article on vaping and public health:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Friday warned people not to use vaping ingredients bought on the street, and to stop modifying either nicotine or cannabis e-cigarette devices, in an effort to curb the vaping-related lung sicknesses that have alarmed health officials in more than two dozen states this summer.

"We know some of this is associated with T.H.C.," said Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration. "I think this is probably going to be associated with illegal products," Dr. Gottlieb said. "It's not like the major manufacturers have suddenly changed their ingredients," he said. "It's probably something new that has been introduced into the market by an illegal manufacturer, either a new flavor or a new way to emulsify T.H.C. that is causing these injuries."

I urge you to consider the unintended consequences of this feel good measure and keep flavored tobacco products in licensed, regularly inspected retail outlet like mine who don't sell THC and don't sell illegal products. We are responsible businesses and we resent being accused of selling flavored tobacco to minors.

Thank you.

USA TOBACCO 3VAPE Shop
401 S. VERMONT AVE STE 9
LOS ANGELES CA 90020
(Signature) *Cl*

Media Wine & Spirits 4
7435 Melrose Ave.
L.A. CA 90046
323-651-4766

Council President Herb Wesson
LA City Council
200 N. Spring Street
Room 430
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilman Wesson,

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I own a convenience store in Los Angeles and I am opposed to the proposed flavored tobacco ban.

Banning a legal product in my store will simply drive sales into the illicit marketplace where there will be no one to verify the age of the buyer, no one to ensure that the product being sold is not counterfeit or produced in someone's garage, no one to pay the excise taxes that keep these types of products off the street and out of the hands of consumers of all ages – not just kids.

If the concern of the public health department is that retailers are selling tobacco products to minors then they should be focusing their efforts on enforcing existing laws that prohibit the sale of tobacco to minors and assisting licensed retailers in keeping ALL tobacco products away from kids.

Instead of a flavor ban, why not require age verification technology at licensed alcohol and tobacco retailers?

Instead of assuming that all retailers are selling flavored tobacco to minors (which they are not) why not make a flavored tobacco ban a penalty for any retailer found selling tobacco to a minor.

In short, why not use carrots rather than sticks to encourage businesses to work hand in hand with the City to keep all tobacco products out of the hands of minors?

Thank you.

Ramaz Askar / owner

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Re: Council File: 18-1104, Flavored Tobacco Products

Mr. Wesson,

As a small business owner, I am against a city-wide ban on the sale of menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products. My adult customers come to our store for those products. If a ban prevents me from supplying them, they will take their business to other stores outside the city limits.

A broad ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco, like dip and cigars, would not only hurt Los Angeles retailers, but it would also hurt the city as a whole. Sales tax paid by Los Angeles residents, that should go to support our city, would instead be driven to other communities as adult tobacco consumers shift their tobacco product purchases elsewhere. Adult tobacco consumers in Los Angeles would also be forced to drive farther to shop, increasing already problematic traffic congestion and air pollution.

Instead of limiting adult consumer choice with a total ban on flavored tobacco and menthol cigarettes, the city should support responsible retailers who are committed to enforcing the law and keeping our community safe. The city should focus on the issues that really matter to us—like infrastructure, reducing traffic congestion, and fighting crime.

Thank you,

Tobacco Land
18300 Vanowen St #8
Reseda CA 91335

JJ
Fouad Karroum