



March 7, 2022

Los Angeles City Council  
200 N Spring St  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Subject: Support for Restricting the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products in the City of Los Angeles**

Dear Los Angeles City Councilmembers:

On behalf of the American Lung Association in California, the leading public health organization fighting to reduce and prevent lung disease, I am writing to express our support for the adoption of a restriction on the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol.

Each year in California, nearly 40,000 adults die from smoking-related causes, and over 12,000 kids become new daily smokers. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, tobacco companies have a long history of using flavored products to entice new, younger customers. Eight out of ten youth smokers report that they initiated tobacco use with a flavored tobacco product, and the younger a person is, the more likely they will be to use a flavored tobacco product.

It is critical to ensure that menthol cigarettes are included in the list of flavored tobacco products that are prohibited from sale in the City of Los Angeles. Menthol has long been a flavor used by the tobacco industry to target Black and Brown communities, as well as the LGBTQ+ community. In fact, a 2021 study found that menthol cigarettes were responsible for 1.5 million new smokers, 157,000 smoking-related premature deaths and 1.5 million life years lost among Black Americans from 1980-2018. Enacting a restriction on the sale of menthol cigarettes will assist in reducing health disparities.

As the second largest city in the country, and the largest in California, the City of Los Angeles enacting a restriction on these products can have not only a large and lasting impact locally, but across the country by leading the way with this life saving policy. We thank you your leadership in engaging on this critical ordinance, and strongly urge your vote in support of its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erica Costa".

Erica Costa  
Advocacy Director