From: Walt Muralt
To: Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject: Stop a Tobacco Flavor Ban in Missoula!
Date: Thursday, October 8, 2020 11:00:11 AM

Dear Missoula Council,

As a business operator in Missoula, we take the responsibility of keeping all tobacco products out of kids' hands seriously. We agree kids shouldn't vape or use tobacco products -- but addressing the youth vaping epidemic should not lead the City Council to overextend to tobacco products like menthol cigarettes, and flavored dip and cigars where there is not a youth issue.

I respectfully ask that you oppose a ban on flavored traditional tobacco products, like menthol cigarettes and flavored smokeless tobacco and cigars. A broad ban on these products is unnecessary and would only create other problems. It will also severely hurt responsible retailers like me.

Retailers are the first line of defense when it comes to preventing kids from purchasing tobacco products. Banning the sale of these products would shift sales from law-abiding retailers to illegal sources who don't check IDs. By giving way to an illicit market, a ban on menthol cigarettes, flavored dip and flavored cigars could have devastating effects in our community.
If adult customers cannot buy their preferred products in Missoula, they will go elsewhere to buy their preferred products, and will also purchase gas, grocery items and beverages while there. Our store depends on these sales, especially during these economically uncertain and difficult times.

This issue is critical to our business and businesses across Missoula. Again, I ask that your efforts to address the youth vaping epidemic don't overextend to flavored traditional tobacco products like menthol cigarettes, flavored dip, and flavored cigars, as it will only create other problems. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Walt Muralt
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