



Missoula City-County Health Department

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October 9, 2020

Dear Tobacco Retailers,

Recent data, both nationally and locally, has shown that tobacco use among youth has increased dramatically with flavors playing a significant role in youth initiation and use of tobacco products. Over 80% of young adults who have used a tobacco product reported that the first product was flavored. These products undermine overall efforts to reduce youth tobacco use leading to a new generation of kids becoming addicted to nicotine along with health issues from tobacco use. Several local community groups, health care providers, public health officials, school personnel, parents, and other citizens are deeply concerned about our youth's tobacco use. They have reached out to city council to address this public health crisis. In February, the Missoula City-County Health Board passed a resolution recommending the mayor, city council and county commissioners take further action, including the consideration of an ordinance, to reduce youth access to and use of flavored tobacco.

In early October, the Missoula City Council agreed to consider an ordinance prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco products. **The City Council set a public hearing on the proposed ordinance for Monday, October 19, 2020. The City Council meeting begins at 6 PM.**

The proposed ordinance does two things. It prohibits the sale of any tobacco product by self-service display, with one exception.

The intent of this rule is to make sure that anyone who accesses tobacco products in a retail setting will have to ask for them, giving the clerk a clear opportunity to verify their age.

Secondly, the proposed ordinance prohibits the sale of all flavored tobacco products, whether that be traditional menthol cigarettes or other flavored products like vapes, cigarillos and chews.

Flavors mask the harshness of tobacco and make it easier for new users to become addicted. Not surprisingly, youth report that product flavoring is a top reason that they use tobacco products.

Because this is a health-related ordinance, if it is adopted by the City Council, and also approved by the Missoula City-County Health Board and the County Commissioners, it can be applied within the city and five miles outside the city limits.

A copy of the proposed ordinance is enclosed and can be found on our website at:

[missoulacounty.us/TobaccoFreeMissoula](https://www.missoulacounty.us/TobaccoFreeMissoula)

Information about how to attend the October 19, 2020 City Council hearing and comment on the proposed ordinance can be found here: <https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1226/Meeting-Schedule>.

Written comments can be submitted to the Council before the hearing at council@ci.missoula.mt.us.

More information about how to participate and comment at the hearing can be found here:

<https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/Faq.aspx?QID=743>

Tobacco Free Missoula County
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