



## COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH COMMISSION

### **Commission Members:**

*Mary Jean Sage, Chair*  
*Jean Raymond, Vice Chair*  
*Robert Campbell*  
*Tamar Sekayan*  
*Susan Warren*  
*Candace Winstead*  
*Catherine Shipp*  
*Amy Kleinman*  
*Ginger Cochran*

January 13, 2020

John Peschong, Supervisor, District 1  
 Bruce Gibson, Supervisor, District 2  
 Adam Hill, Chair, District 3  
 Lynn Compton, Vice Chair, District 4  
 Debbie Arnold, Supervisor, District 5

Re: Ordinance to prohibit the sale of electronic smoking devices in unincorporated areas of San Luis Obispo County

Dear Supervisor:

For some time, the San Luis Obispo County Health Commission has been monitoring the teen-vaping epidemic that has been sweeping across our county, as well as the entire U.S. It is with concern that we watch more and more teens become addicted to vaping and the unhealthy effects of that addiction.

In 2018, the U. S. Surgeon General declared youth vaping to be an epidemic. This was following the release of the 2018 National Youth Tobacco Survey which found that the number of high school students who reported being current e-cigarette users had increased 78% from 2017 to 2018. This trend has continued to climb through 2019. E-cigarette use is significantly impacting local high schools, but also extends down through the elementary schools. In 2018, **22% of 11<sup>th</sup> Graders**, 11% of 9<sup>th</sup> Graders, and 3% of 7<sup>th</sup> Graders reported current use of e-cigarettes.<sup>1</sup>

Although it is illegal to sell these products to anyone under the age of 21, vaping is very popular among youth and young adults. 77% of 11<sup>th</sup> Graders (and 50% of 9<sup>th</sup> Graders) in SLO County say it is “Easy or Very Easy” to get these products. In 2019, 16% of tobacco retailers in SLO County were caught selling tobacco to underage decoys during sting operations.

E-cigarette use currently represents more population-level harm than benefit. Researchers at Dartmouth Geisel School of Medicine estimated that for **one adult who quits smoking** as a result of using e-cigarettes, **81 more youth have developed a regular smoking** habit as a result of using e-cigarettes. (Soneji et al, 2018).

As you see, we must all work together to ban these harmful devices that have detrimental effects on our youth. We offer our support to the proposed ordinance amendment that would update the definition of tobacco products to include “electronic smoking devices” and paraphernalia such as e-liquids, and pods

and prohibit the sale of electronic smoking devices in the unincorporated areas of the County. It is our hope that the remaining cities and villages in the county without a comprehensive ban will follow county's lead and bring forth and pass similar ordinances.

We are concerned, however, that the ordinance does not address the sale of flavored tobacco products which is the tobacco industry's primary method for targeting and hooking new smokers. **Please consider adding a prohibition of the sale of flavored tobacco products to make this ban on the sale of e-cigarettes a more comprehensive and meaningful policy.**

Both opponents of smoking and purveyors of cigarettes have long recognized the significance of adolescence as the period during which smoking behaviors are typically developed. National data show that about 95% of adult tobacco users begin smoking before the age of 21, and most begin with flavored products. Tobacco companies responded by expanding the types of non-cigarette tobacco products they offer, and now make most of those products available in a growing array of kid-friendly flavors. Little cigars, smokeless tobacco, hookah, and e-cigarettes are marketed in a wide variety of candy flavors with colorful packaging and deceptive names that appeal to youth.

Tobacco companies have a long history of marketing to vulnerable populations, and target youth with imagery and by marketing candy and fruit flavored tobacco. The anesthetizing effects of menthol masks the harshness of tobacco, making it more appealing to beginning smokers, and menthol smokers show greater dependence, and are less likely to quit than non-menthol smokers. Postponing youth experimentation and initiation can help reduce the number of youths who will begin smoking .

Presently, more than 30 jurisdictions in places as diverse as Yolo County, Contra Costa County, and the cities of Beverly Hills, San Francisco, Richmond, and Santa Maria have passed strong policies. We strongly encourage this Board to choose the strongest youth protections available by prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco products, in addition to prohibiting the sale of e-cigarettes and paraphernalia. Taking this important public health step will help to prevent young people in San Luis Obispo County from ever beginning this deadly addiction, as well as help to support those who are trying to quit.

Sincerely,

Mary Jean Sage, Chair  
San Luis Obispo County Health Commission

<sup>1</sup> California Healthy Kids Survey, 2018



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Re: Support for Proposed Ordinance Changes to ban smoking in all public areas within unincorporated San Luis Obispo County

Dear Supervisor:

The San Luis Obispo County Health Commission offers its support for the above-mentioned ordinance which would ban smoking in all public places. We applaud the ordinance for its three main purposes of:

- Updating the definition of smoking to include e-cigarettes and cannabis
- Prohibiting smoking in all outdoor public places in the unincorporated areas of SLO County with the exemptions allowed for areas designated by the Director of County Parks
- Closing the existing exemptions of California's Smoking in the Workplace Law to include all indoor public places

Consider these health facts as you deliberate and pass the proposed ordinance:

- All Secondhand Smoke (SHS) is Harmful! Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic and about 70 that can cause cancer.<sup>1</sup> Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, even in people who have never smoked, increases the risk of heart attack and stroke in non-smokers and has been linked to lymphoma, leukemia, liver cancer, and brain tumors in children. Young children are most affected by SHS and least able to avoid it.
- Secondhand marijuana smoke contains many of the same cancer-causing substances and toxic chemicals as secondhand tobacco smoke.<sup>2</sup> It also has significantly higher amounts of toxic chemicals such as tar and ammonia, and more than twice the amount of hydrogen cyanide, an extremely poisonous chemical.
- E-cigarettes and vaping devices are harmful.<sup>3</sup> It's not harmless water vapor that's emitted, but a toxic aerosol. Most aerosol is a mixture of nicotine, tiny particles of metals, and contains at least 10 chemicals identified by California's Prop 65 list of chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm. Much like cigarette smoke, e-cigarette aerosol

produces ultrafine particles, which settle deeply into the lungs when inhaled by people using it or near it.

Comprehensive tobacco control efforts have contributed to reductions in tobacco-related diseases and deaths across diverse racial, ethnic, education, and socioeconomic groups. **Healthcare savings are greater than the cost of the intervention.** Comprehensive smoke-free policies have shown to substantially improve indoor air quality, reduce secondhand smoke exposure, change social norms regarding the acceptability of smoking, prevent smoking initiation by youth and young adults, help smokers quit and reduce heart attack and asthma hospitalizations among nonsmokers.

Comprehensive smoke-free policies are associated with:

- Decreased exposure to secondhand smoking (50% reduction in biomarkers)
- Decreased prevalence of tobacco smoking (absolute reduction of 2.7 % points)
- Decreased tobacco consumption (absolute reduction of 1.2 cigarettes per day)
- Fewer cardiovascular events (5.1% reduction in hospital admissions)
- Decreased asthma morbidity (20.1% reduction in hospital admissions)

Smoke-free policies **did not** have an adverse economic impact on the business activity of restaurants, bars, or establishments catering to tourists; some studies found a small positive effect on these policies.<sup>4</sup>

We, the San Luis Obispo County Health Commission, urge you to proceed with passing a comprehensive ban on smoking in San Luis Obispo County. Thank you for serving SLO County and for your commitment to protecting the health and well-being of the residents of this dynamic county.

Sincerely,

Mary Jean Sage, Chair  
County Health Commission

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer/secondhand-smoke.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://tobaccofreeca.com/secondhand-smoke/marijuana-secondhand-smoke-dangers/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://tobaccofreeca.com/secondhand-smoke/what-you-need-to-know-about-all-secondhand-smoke-and-vape>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/tobacco-use-and-secondhand-smoke-exposure-smoke-free-policies>



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January 13, 2020

City of Morro Bay

John Headding, Mayor – [jheadding@morrobayca.gov](mailto:jheadding@morrobayca.gov)

Marlys McPherson, Council Member – [mmcpherson@morrobayca.gov](mailto:mmcpherson@morrobayca.gov)

Dawn Addis, Council Member – [daddis@morrobayca.gov](mailto:daddis@morrobayca.gov)

Jeff Heller, Council Member – [jheller@morrobayca.gov](mailto:jheller@morrobayca.gov)

Robert Davis, Council Member – [rdavis@morrobayca.gov](mailto:rdavis@morrobayca.gov)

Dear Mayor and City Council:

We are asking for reconsideration of the adjustments that are being presented to City of Morro Bay Ordinance No. 627, Chapter 5.54. A comprehensive ordinance was introduced on November 12, 2019 and changes were made on December 10, 2019. We are concerned about the proposed changes and that the ordinance now does not address the sale of flavored tobacco products (the drug) which is the tobacco industry's primary method of targeting and hooking new smokers. The city appears to be targeting the device, but not the drug.

Tobacco industry marketing is now focusing on a new audience – kids. For one adult who quits smoking as a result of using e-cigarettes, 81 more youth have developed a regular smoking habit as a result of using e-cigarettes.<sup>1</sup> Tobacco companies have a long history of marketing to vulnerable populations, and target youth with imagery and by marketing candy and fruit flavored tobacco. The anesthetizing effects of menthol masks the harshness of tobacco, making it more appealing to beginning smokers, and menthol smokers show greater dependence, and are less likely to quit than non-menthol smokers. Postponing youth experimentation and initiation can help reduce the number of youths who will ever begin smoking.

Presently, more than 30 jurisdictions in places as diverse as Yolo County, Contra Costa County, and the cities of Beverly Hills, San Francisco, Santa Maria, and Richmond have passed strong policies including the ban on flavored tobacco products. We strongly encourage this council to choose the strongest youth protections available by prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco products, in addition to prohibiting the sale of e-cigarettes and paraphernalia. Taking this important public health step will help to prevent young people in Morro Bay from ever beginning this deadly addiction, as well as help to support those who are trying to quit.

Sincerely,

Mary Jean Sage, Chair

San Luis Obispo County Health Commission

<sup>1</sup> <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.371/journal.pone.0193328>