

# County of Santa Clara

## Public Health Department



Health Officer  
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### 9/24/2021 – RE: Agenda Item 7.1, Amendment to Chapter 6.87, Tobacco Retail License

Dear Mayor Liccardo and San Jose City Councilmembers,

On behalf of the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department, I am writing in support of the City of San Jose adopting a comprehensive Tobacco Retail License. I applaud city leadership for their consideration to update the Tobacco Retail License Ordinance with provisions to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco, including e-cigarette products, and reduce the availability of tobacco products in the community.

The Public Health Department's mission is to protect and improve the health of our community. We work to prevent disease and injury, promote healthy lifestyles, create healthy environments and advocate for policy and system changes that advance department priorities. By including and maintaining a lens based on racial and health equity, we strive for an upstream public policy agenda across all sectors and for guiding principles that are in alignment with public health priorities and values. A strong, comprehensive tobacco retail license without exemptions is a necessary step in reducing tobacco-related disparities and inequities since the tobacco industry has historically targeted sales of tobacco products, particularly flavored products, to youth and communities of color. Additionally, by focusing enforcement and compliance at the point of sale in stores, and not with individuals, the city will be implementing an effective strategy that does not unfairly punish youth and people that have been unjust targets of aggressive tobacco industry marketing.

More than half of all stores that sell tobacco products in Santa Clara County are in San Jose; and more than a quarter of tobacco retailers in San Jose are located within 1,000 feet of a school. Neighborhoods with high concentration of tobacco retailers and increased availability of tobacco products contributes to higher tobacco use initiation, lower rates of success with quitting, and normalizes tobacco use. Strategies to limit tobacco sales in communities play a vital role in improving health outcomes.

In Santa Clara County, one in eight deaths annually is attributed to smoking-related illness or disease, such as cancer, heart disease, and respiratory diseases. In 2019, the California Student Tobacco Survey report revealed that nearly one in three students in Santa Clara County have tried vaping, while 82.3% of teens currently using tobacco reported using a flavored product. Ending the sale of menthol and other flavored tobacco products is critical to prevent the next generation of youth from lifelong tobacco addiction.

In closing, we strongly urge you to move forward with a strong, comprehensive tobacco retail license without exemptions. Through the Healthy Cities Grant, we are encouraged by the current partnership between the City of San Jose and SCC PHD's Tobacco-Free Communities Program and look forward to our continued collaboration. We thank you for your leadership and dedication towards the health of all San Jose residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara H. Cody, MD".

Sara H. Cody, MD  
Health Officer and Public Health Director