

February 12, 2021

DRAFT

Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers,

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the United States. The rise of e-cigarettes and vaping in the City of Long Beach has raised concerns that another generation will be dependent on nicotine. Reducing tobacco use will take the efforts of both adult and youth leaders in the community. The members of the Board of Health and Human Services strongly encourage you to vote to renew the current Long Beach ordinance ban on flavored tobacco and support the ongoing efforts of the Youth Leaders for Tobacco Control (YLTC).

We collectively endorse joining YLTC in their efforts to renew the current Long Beach Ordinance ban on flavored tobacco. We recommend that the Long Beach City Council support their efforts which are backed by the existing decision to uphold the protections for our city's youth from the harmful effects of tobacco. Youth leaders are critical and powerful allies in the fight against an unregulated e-cigarette and vaping industry and we support their goals.

The Board of Health supports the YLTC in their efforts to educate themselves and others on the dangers of tobacco and vaping products. Tobacco products and their use pose an increased risk to youth due to the fact that their brains are still developing and are particularly vulnerable to addiction and long-term negative effects. The tobacco industry targets youth through the appeal of fruit and candy flavored e-cigarettes. In fact, ninety-seven percent (97%) of all youth who vape use flavored e-cigarettes. People of color, low income, and LGBTQ+ youth are especially targeted. There is a higher density of tobacco retailers in districts with a higher percentage of latinx and black youth. It is also worth noting, youth who vape are 5 - 7 times more likely to be infected with Covid-19.

The Board of Health supports the YLTC's ongoing fight against the rise of teenage nicotine addiction. By supporting their ongoing mission, we can expect to see them continue to host cigarette butt clean-ups across the city, attend and speak at city council meetings, and present to local stakeholders. As a youth-driven coalition, they bring unique perspectives and value in advocating for tobacco control in our community. We hope that you will join us in supporting their important mission and leadership efforts and by voting to reinstate the ban on flavored tobacco products in the City of Long Beach.

Sincerely,

Signatures of board members.