



Date: January 24, 2006

To: Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers

From: Councilmember Bonnie Lowenthal, First District. *BL*
Councilmember Tonia Reyes Uranga, Seventh District *TRU*
Councilmember Val Lerch, Ninth District *Val*

Subject: Request for Health Department Presentation on Tobacco Youth Purchase Survey

Background:

In 1992, Congress passed the Synar rule entitled *Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grants: Sale and Distribution of Tobacco Products to Individuals Under 18 Years of Age*. This legislation requires each state have and enforce an effective law prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to children under 18 years of age. It further stipulates that states failing to comply will lose 40 percent of block grant funds for substance abuse prevention. For California, this is equivalent to more than \$100 million for local community programs.

According to the California Department of Health Services, Tobacco Control Section Youth Purchase Survey of 2005, statewide the rate of illegal sales of tobacco is 10.2%.

Recently the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services and Health conducted a Youth Purchase Survey throughout the City of Long Beach. In order to conduct a thorough survey, observations were made at 266 of the 1,033 known retailers of tobacco products. The observations were made by 12 youths from Long Beach.

Of the 266 tobacco retailers divided among the 9 council districts, the survey found that 96 retailers or 36.1%, illegally sold to the underage volunteers conducting the survey. The highest illegal sales occurred in donut shops, gas stations and pharmacies.

Recommendation:

We, therefore request that the Health Department make a presentation to the City Council at the January 24, 2006 council meeting to report their findings, and that the matter be referred to the Public Safety Advisory Commission for further study and recommendation on next steps.