

**From:** [Tobacco Free](#)  
**To:** [\\_CityCouncilListPublic](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Letter of Support for Consent Item 13.7 Regulation of Retail Tobacco Sales on 6.4.24  
**Date:** Friday, May 31, 2024 2:32:26 PM  
**Attachments:** [Santa Rosa Letter5.21.24.pdf](#)

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Good afternoon City of Santa Rosa Council Members,

Please accept this letter of support requesting for the passing of the TRL with the highest of standards - including the ban on sales of electronic smoking devices.

Thank you for your prompt action and keeping our youth healthy!

Sincerely,

The Tobacco Free Sonoma County Community Coalition



Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

The Tobacco-Free Sonoma County Community Coalition is committed to ending all commercial tobacco use and nicotine addiction in the City of Santa Rosa - ensuring the next generation of youth do not become addicted to emerging tobacco products.

The commercial tobacco industry's products have one terrible thing in common: **they cause disease, disability, and death.** The human toll is seen when a toddler gasps for air during an asthma attack caused by cigarette smoke, a teen is hospitalized for chest pain and shortness of breath from vaping, another feels anxious and depressed from nicotine addiction, and a family buries their loved one who died of lung cancer.[i]

Tobacco products\* kill half a million Americans each year and virtually all smokers begin their lifelong nicotine addiction as teens. The tobacco industry kills 110 Californians each day, and 30 more suffer from a tobacco-related disease.[ii] A tobacco retail license (TRL) is a way for communities to ensure there is greater oversight and safeguards in place for retailers who sell deadly tobacco products. TRLs align with community values of health and safety and are proven to be effective at reducing youth use of tobacco products.

A comprehensive TRL is one that carries license fees adequate to support compliance, has a robust fine structure and includes regulations that retailers must follow. A TRL is an important driver of compliance, as it results in greater adherence to tobacco laws currently in place. It serves as a mechanism to implement other, locally prioritized provisions, such as prohibiting product discounts, creating tobacco-free pharmacies, and enforcing mail-order/internet delivery and point-of-sale restrictions. **A TRL decreases the influence of the commercial tobacco industry and puts health for all persons over profit.**

A 2019 study evaluating the impact of California's local TRL ordinances on youth smoking rates found that youth and young adults who reside in jurisdictions with comprehensive TRL ordinances had lower rates of electronic smoking devices (ESDs) use compared to those who live in jurisdictions with poor or no TRL policies. Additionally, youth were less likely to smoke in high school and initiate smoking at 18.[iii] **Retail licensure strategies are an effective approach to decrease the prevalence of youth tobacco use and reduce the socioeconomic disparities in tobacco use and retailer density.**[iv]

A TRL helps ensure a level playing field by weeding out businesses that are not following the laws and who gain an unfair advantage and increased profits over those who play by the rules. Almost every state and many cities require a license to hunt, fish, keep a pet, operate a tattoo parlor, run a hair or nail salon, sell liquor, sell marijuana and more, but many still don't require a license to sell addictive and deadly tobacco products. Certainly, the City Council of Santa Rosa would want to treat tobacco products and ESDs in the same manner as other business licenses. [v]

People on low incomes, people of color, and people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) are more likely to experience a range of health problems related to the use of tobacco. The tobacco industry promotes its products more within these communities and as a result, rates of tobacco use, and related health problems, are much higher for these communities compared to the general population. TRLs may include, for example, density limits and buffer zones for youth frequented areas, and these provisions work well against this industry's predatory marketing practices. **TRLs can reduce inequities created by tobacco industry practices.**

Tobacco doesn't just negatively impact the health of individuals; it also endangers the health of the environment. ESDs and cigarette waste makes its way into the environment where it pollutes water, air, and land with toxic chemicals, heavy metals, plastics, and residual nicotine. Comprehensive local ordinances are needed to reduce the negative environmental consequences of tobacco products. **A City of Santa Rosa TRL policy that restricts access to tobacco products, including ESDs is a proven strategy to reduce tobacco product waste and its impact in our county.**

To effectively curb the high rates of access to all tobacco products and ESDs in the retail setting, The Tobacco-Free Sonoma County Community Coalition recommends that a comprehensive TRL policy in the City of Santa Rosa must include the following provisions which are consistent with the most protective ordinances established in other local jurisdictions:

- No sale of flavored tobacco products
- No online or delivery sales
- No sale of electronic smoking devices
- Minimum price of \$10
- Minimum pack size – 5 little cigars
- No discounts, coupons, or price promotions
- No sale of tobacco in pharmacies
- Limit on the total number of tobacco retailers
- New retailer proximity parameters (E.g., proximity to K-12 schools & parks)

Comprehensive TRL requirements are an effective policy tool to generate income for local enforcement which will limit youth initiation of tobacco products, support people who desire to quit, and protect our environment. We sincerely urge you to approve the proposed Tobacco Retail License policy to maintain a healthy and beautiful City of Santa Rosa.

Sincerely,

*Pam Dranger*

Chair of Tobacco Free Sonoma County Community Coalition

Action on Smoking & Health (ASH)

Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy, and Leadership (APPEAL)

Aladios Health

Blue Zones Project

California Health Collaborative

Center For Well-Being

Gravenstein Health Action

Parents Against Vaping E-cigarettes

Petaluma Health Center

Ruth E. Malone, RN, PhD University of California, San Francisco

Santa Rosa Community Health

Sierra Club

Tobacco-Free Sonoma County

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\*Tobacco products include, for example, electronic smoking devices (e-cigarettes), cigarettes, chew, dissolvables, and any component part or accessory like rolling papers, wraps and pipes.

[1] <https://www.undo.org/disease#sources-20>

[1] Jackler RK, Ramamurthi D. Nicotine arms race: JUUL and the high-nicotine product market. *Tob Control*. February 2019; tobacco control-2018-054796. doi:10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2018-054796.

[1] Astor RL, Urman R, Barrington-Trimis JL, Berhane K, Steinberg J, Cousineau M, Leventhal AM, Unger JB, Cruz T, Pentz MA, Samet JM, McConnell R. Tobacco Retail Licensing and Youth Product Use. *Pediatrics*. 2019;143(2):e20173536.

[1] Lawman HG, Henry KA, Scheeres A, Hillengas A, Coffman R, Strasser AA. Tobacco Retail Licensing and Density 3 Years After License Regulations in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (2012–2019). *American Journal of Public Health*. 2020;110(4):547–553.

[1] Astor RL, Urman R, Barrington-Trimis JL, Berhane K, Steinberg J, Cousineau M, Leventhal AM, Unger JB, Cruz T, Pentz MA, Samet JM, McConnell R. Tobacco Retail Licensing and Youth Product Use. *Pediatrics*. 2019;143(2):e20173536.