



Monday, February 12th, 2018

Dear Members of the Duluth City Council,

On behalf of thousands of Americans for Prosperity-Minnesota activists, I urge you to oppose the local ordinance proposal to ban the sale of flavored tobacco products when it comes up for consideration on Monday evening, February 12th.

A ban on flavored tobacco will negatively impact Duluth's economy much more than it will accomplish any anti-smoking goals. If this ban goes into effect, consumers will simply choose to buy tobacco and other products outside the city limits, just like they used to when alcohol sales were banned on Sundays. In fact, by lifting the outdated "Sunday Sales" policy last session, the legislature gave business owners and consumers additional options to decide for themselves when to engage in commerce, and many communities now benefit from additional tax revenue being repatriated from across the border.

This ban won't just impact smokers or convenience store owners. It would also painfully impact an already tight city budget. All that business going across the border means less sales tax revenue collected – not just on cigarettes but on all taxable items purchased instore while stopping for any of the proposed banned products.

How can you support dipping into taxpayers' pockets for additional tax revenue for transportation, while at the same time voting to send current revenues across the border?

Americans for Prosperity-Minnesota and our activists believe in the endless potential of sound free market principles and in the power of consumers. No matter how well-intentioned your efforts to curb teen smoking are, the truth is that arbitrary and ineffective flavor bans that only punish law-abiding residents will do little to help.

Duluth should simply ensure that current laws on the books that prohibit teen smoking are properly enforced – without limiting consumer choice, hurting the local economy, or damaging the city's budget.

Please vote against this ban when it comes up for a vote on Monday.

Sincerely,

Jason Flohrs
State Director for Minnesota
Americans for Prosperity