



Public Health
Division

County of Santa Cruz

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Press Release

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City of Santa Cruz Bans Flavored Tobacco Products

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY – The Santa Cruz City Council voted to ban the sale of flavored tobacco products in the city during its November 27 meeting. The ban covers products with any “characterizing flavor” other than tobacco, including candy and fruit-flavored electronic smoking devices such as Juul. Santa Cruz joins two dozen other California jurisdictions who have placed restrictions on the sale of these products.

“I’m grateful to city council members for their leadership,” said Mimi Hall, Director of the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency. “This is an important step in protecting our youth from a lifetime of nicotine addiction and I look forward to working with other local jurisdictions to pass similar protections.”

Hall explained that products like e-cigarettes, little cigars, and smokeless tobacco use flavors like gummy bear, chocolate and cotton candy to appeal to youth. Flavors mask the harsh taste of tobacco and keep kids smoking long enough to get them hooked.

According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, 80% of young people who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product. Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reveals a surge in use between 2017 and 2018, with 1 in 5 high school students and 1 in 20 middle school students currently using e-cigarettes.

More than a dozen citizens spoke in favor of the ban at its first reading on November 11, while spectators held signs reading “Bubble Gum Shouldn’t Kill You” and “I am not your replacement smoker.”

“This was really a team effort,” said Gina Cole, Co-chair of the Santa Cruz County Tobacco Education Coalition, which supported the ban. “It’s exciting to see parents, youth, health care providers and policy makers come together to make a difference.”

The ban will be enforced starting January 1, 2020, giving retailers time to liquidate their existing stock of flavored tobacco products.

For more information on these changes please contact Casey Hemard: 831-420-5010



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