From:	Tony Dobbs
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	No on the Flavor Ban
Date:	Tuesday, October 6, 2020 3:05:36 PM

My name is Tony Dobbs. I was a very addicted and heavy smoker of cigarettes for almost 20 years. I hated smoking, I hated the taste, the smell, the way it made me feel. I would wake up 2-3 times throughout the night and have to smoke a cigarette just to stop the coughing. I tried to quit a couple of times, but it always pulled me back in. A good friend of mine that I worked with started using an e-cig pen and told me all about it just about every single day as he would hear me cough. I ignored and ignored... Finally, one day I had enough and asked him the details on where to get one and what to order. He wrote down on a small sticky note exactly what to ask for at the shop across town. Looking at the sticky which said "Juice-Gummy Bears(18MG)" I thought it sounded a little strange. Who wants to smoke something that tastes like a gummy bear I thought to myself. I brought the note home and talked with my wife about it. She agreed that we needed to try something. The next day we drove to the shop and ordered 1 set up with the Gummy Bear juice. She immediately took to it and loved the flavor and the device. I on the other hand took a little bit longer to adjust, maybe a week. After that week, I never looked back. I started to feel much better after about a month. I did not smell any longer, and obviously the nasty taste of cigarettes was gone. I was able to start working out again, running and doing all the normal and healthy things that a person does.

About 9 months later, the opportunity came about for me to open my own Vape Shop. My wife and I were so excited to be able to share our experiences on the road to quitting smoking with other adults who were struggling to quit. We had our eyes opened up to this great new product, that actually worked and we wanted to share it with the world!! We thought that owning a Vape shop would be a great way to do just this. We opened our shop on October 31st, 2012 right here in Missoula. It was slow going at first as not too many people here had even heard of it. A couple months later and the trickle of customers started coming in. What a great feeling it was to have customers start coming back after purchasing a starter set up and telling us that "It was working for them!" So many of our customers we now know by name because of the relationship that we have built with them over the years. The battle that you go through when trying to quit cigarettes forms a real bond with people that are with you all along the way. Telling each other "You are doing great" or "It's my __ year anniversary from smoking cigarettes!" I have felt for so many years that I am bringing a great product to our town and getting people off of cigarettes.

Fast forward 8 years to last week when I was informed that the Missoula City Council is moving forward with a City Ordinance to Ban flavors. This means that it would be taking away flavors from the majority of my customers. You would be surprised, but I have so many older little ladies and gentlemen that love Spearmint, Cotton Candy, etc... "Why would anyone do this" I asked myself. Oh, to protect the kids was the answer. I am fully onboard with protecting underage children from smoking. The truth is that these kids are not getting it from my shop that I have built and loved so much for 8 years. I would not stand for it. We have not once failed an ID check in our years open. We all know that the internet does exist and that many tech savvy kids in this day in age are capable of figuring out how to order these products online. It is just sad to me that you would try and shut down a business that has built such a great standing and has helped so many adults to quit cigarettes. I really wish that there was another way to do this. Just please, think hard on if you will really be helping/solving any problems by enacting this ordinance or if kids will still just find a way to get these products like I did when I started smoking underage.

Sincerely,
Tony Dobbs
Owner-Liberty Vapor