From:	Marty Rehbein
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject:	FW: Concerning local tobacco legislation.
Date:	Wednesday, October 7, 2020 11:23:14 AM

From: Parker Smith <parker.smith@core-mark.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 7, 2020 11:19 AM
To: Marty Rehbein <RehbeinM@ci.missoula.mt.us>
Subject: Concerning local tobacco legislation.

Name	Parker Smith
Email	parker.smith@core-mark.com
Phone	5415217025
Message	Dear Council Member: I am writing to urge you to oppose the ordinance that would ban the sale of all flavored tobacco products. Instead, I ask you to consider removing the proposed ban on traditional flavored tobacco products including menthol cigarettes, mint and wintergreen smokeless tobacco, flavored cigars and pipe tobacco. We ask that you also consider allowing all flavored tobacco products to be sold in age restricted stores, similar to other products such as alcohol or marijuana. The main focus of the ordinance appears to be responding to the increase in underage use of electronic cigarettes and nicotine vapor products. While we take the responsibility of selling tobacco products to legal age adults very seriously, we also share your concern that underage persons should not use any tobacco product, including electronic cigarettes and nicotine vapor products. However, the council should not overreach and ban the sale of all traditional flavored tobacco products because both youth and adult use of menthol cigarettes, mint and wintergreen smokeless tobacco, flavored cigars and pipe tobacco is at historic lows and decreasing further. This means that prohibiting the sale of all flavored tobacco products is government overreach because the current proposal simply goes too far. In fact, banning all traditional flavored tobacco products would remove hundreds of product brands from our store. If retailers are forced to stop selling flavored tobacco products, then customers would simply drive to another store in a neighboring city or purchase their preferred tobacco

products over the Internet. Even worse, they could turn to illicit market sellers who will readily supply smuggled flavored tobacco products to anyone of any age and are not concerned with checking IDs to comply with the law. In January of 2020, the federal government raised the age to purchase to 21 to help protect youth from social sources of friends and family, the number one reason youth have access to tobacco. This new law should be allowed to work before legal products are banned.

In these challenging times due to the Coronavirus pandemic, retail sales have already dropped considerably. A further reduction in sales of flavored tobacco products could force retailers to lay off employees or close their businesses because stores will not only lose tobacco sales, but sales of gasoline, snacks and beverages as well when customers patronize stores in other cities. Tobacco sales are an important part of a retailer's business model, and banning hundreds of flavored tobacco products will only lead to the closing of stores. So far, retailers have survived the pandemic, but will not survive a ban on the sale of all flavored tobacco products.

If the council's main concern is flavored nicotine vapor products, then the ordinance should be amended to remove traditional flavored tobacco products from the proposed sales ban.

Thank you for considering my concerns.