

Cyndie Martel

From: Camille Cummings <camille@savingblacklives.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 11, 2025 7:14 AM
To: Julie McMillan; Elizabeth Robbins; Teri Dowling; C. William Kircher; Mathew Salter; CouncilAll; Cyndie Martel
Cc: Phillip Gardiner; Valerie Yerger; Charles Debnam; Carol McGruder
Subject: [EXTERNAL] LETTER OF SUPPORT-- Protect Kids and Keep the Town of Ross Tobacco-Free!
Attachments: SUPPORT_ Protect Kids and Keep the Town of Ross Tobacco-Free!_ AATCLC 9_11.docx.pdf

Dear Mayor Julie McMillan, Mayor Pro Tempore Elizabeth Robbins, Council Member Teri Dowling, Council Member C. William Kircher, Jr., and Council Member Mathew Salter,

The African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council (AATCLC) supports the Youth Advocacy Committee's (YAC) request to implement an "Endgame Initiative" to prevent the issuance of tobacco sales licenses in the Town of Ross, ensuring that the Town remains free of commercial tobacco retailers.

As the Trump Administration continues to weaken public health systems and exacerbate health disparities, cities like Ross have both the authority and the responsibility to implement measures to protect their residents. Strong local policies to reduce and/or prevent commercial tobacco use are essential to protecting young people, and the broader community from the predatory marketing practices used by the tobacco industry to make addictive nicotine and tobacco products attractive and easily accessible.

We should note that statistics show that the commercial tobacco industry targets the Black Community with more advertisements, more lucrative promotions, and easier access to cheaper cigarettes compared to other communities (Henriksen et al., 2011; Seidenberg et al., 2010). These predatory marketing practices for the past 50 years have not only impacted the African American community, but young people overall.

The proposed "Endgame Initiative" will strengthen SB793, the state law that limits tobacco sales and disrupts the predatory marketing tactics used by commercial tobacco companies, which disproportionately affect poorer communities, marginalized groups, youths, and communities of color.

The AATCLC

Formed in 2008, the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council comprises a cadre of dedicated community activists, academics, public health advocates, and researchers. Our headquarters are in California, but we are national in our scope and reach. We have partnered with community stakeholders, elected officials, and public health agencies across the country, including in Chicago, Boston, Minneapolis, Berkeley, San Francisco, New York, and beyond. Our efforts have shaped the national discussion and direction of tobacco control policy, practices, and priorities, primarily as they affect the lives of Black Americans, African immigrant populations, and, ultimately, all individuals who smoke. The AATCLC has been at the forefront in elevating the regulation of mentholated and other flavored tobacco products on the national tobacco control agenda, including testifying at the FDA hearings in 2010 and 2011 when the agency first considered removing menthol cigarettes from the marketplace. In November 2019, we testified before Congress in support of HR 2339 (The Pallone Bill), which would have prohibited the manufacturing and selling of menthol and all flavored tobacco products in the U.S. The bill passed the House in February 2020 but did not advance in the Senate. In June 2020, the AATCLC and Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) filed a lawsuit against the FDA for failing to remove menthol from the market, backed by strong scientific evidence that the FDA should have acted immediately. Later, the American Medical Association (AMA) and the National Medical Association (NMA)

joined the lawsuit as plaintiffs. When the FDA began the rulemaking process, we withdrew the lawsuit. We filed a second lawsuit on April 2, 2024, after the FDA had not acted for more than seven months beyond its initial deadline to finalize the new rule, extending the agency's 15-year delay in equitable policymaking.

Call to Action!

We urge you to **put the health of Ross residents at the forefront of your thoughts, not the interests and profits of the tobacco industry, the vaping industry, and their surrogates.** Now is the time to demonstrate that local-level policy can effectively fight back against the commercial tobacco industry, which targets our youth and most vulnerable populations with deadly products. Say **"Yes"** to the protection of **all** residents of Ross.

Sincerely,



Phillip Gardiner, Dr. P.H. Co-Chair AATCLC www.savingblacklives.org



Carol McGruder, Co-Chair AATCLC



Valerie Yerger, N.D., Co-Chair AATCLC





September 11, 2025

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