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Lafayette bans sale of flavored tobacco products

By *Nick Marnell*

Flavored tobacco products will be on the way out come the end of June after the Lafayette City Council unanimously voted to ban the sale of the products in the city at its May 13 meeting. On the way in is a tobacco retailers license which will apply to all sellers of tobacco, tobacco products and tobacco paraphernalia.

The city expects that the tobacco retailers license will help with the enforcement of state and federal tobacco control laws, particularly laws prohibiting sales of tobacco products to minors. Lafayette will issue 11 tobacco retailers licenses, the businesses must reapply each year and licenses will not be granted to pharmacies.

Speakers mostly applauded both the flavored tobacco product ban and the licensing regulations, with one representative from Contra Costa Health Services confirming that licensing has been proven effective in reducing the sale of tobacco to youth. "We do not support a business that is in the line of work to kill you," she said.

The president of an industry trade group insisted that the ban on selling flavored tobacco products would not reduce smoking and will shift spending to adjacent cities. "It punishes retailers who abide by the law," he said.

Council Member Cam Burks, who introduced the flavored tobacco ban and retailers licensing ordinance in 2018, called the passing of the ordinance "the proudest day since I've served on the city council. I don't think there's anything greater than protecting the health of our youth."

The ordinance moved to the city council consent calendar for adoption May 28, and if adopted will become law June 27. Depending on eligibility requirements, retailers may apply for an extension of up to 10 months to sell their existing flavored tobacco product.

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