

From: **Ashley Freitas** <Ashley.F@strauchco.com>

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Subject: Letter to Placerville City Council - Proposed Tobacco Retailers Ordinance

To: pv.planning@gmail.com <pv.planning@gmail.com>

Dear Members of the Placerville City Council,

My name is Ashley Freitas. I am a Risk and Compliance Manager that manages the ID Compliance Program for our store in the city of Placerville as well as a number of other stores in Northern California. Unfortunately, I am not able to attend this meeting in person, so I am writing to you today to express my concerns regarding the proposed ordinance to regulate tobacco products and retailers in Placerville.

As a local business, I want to start by emphasizing that our stores already take the responsibility of preventing underage tobacco use very seriously. We have implemented a stringent ID verification process that includes monthly employee training, continuous monitoring through our BARS program audits, and monthly video reviews to ensure compliance. We also continue to pass all government stings for both alcohol and tobacco products. These measures reflect our ongoing commitment to ensuring tobacco products are not sold to minors, and I believe these efforts demonstrate our dedication to responsible retailing.

While I recognize the importance of addressing youth tobacco and nicotine use, I believe that the proposed measures—including minimum pricing, packaging requirements, and restrictions on the transferability of tobacco licenses—will ultimately have negative consequences for the city and its residents, without effectively curbing tobacco use.

By implementing a minimum pricing structure, you risk pushing businesses out of the city, which could result in the loss of local jobs, decreased tax revenue, and a shift in the tobacco market to neighboring cities or counties. This could lead to businesses moving just outside the city limits, effectively undermining the purpose of the ordinance while doing nothing to reduce the demand for tobacco products. Instead of solving the problem within our city, it simply shifts the issue to other areas, potentially resulting in even fewer safeguards for our residents.

Similarly, the proposed packaging requirements create unnecessary barriers for local businesses. These measures will only add administrative burdens and financial stress on retailers, especially small business owners who are already operating with thin margins. As these businesses are pushed out of Placerville, the city risks losing valuable economic activity and community support.

The proposed prohibition on the transferability of tobacco licenses also presents additional challenges, particularly for business owners who may wish to sell their establishments in the future. Many local small businesses rely on the ability to transfer their licenses when ownership changes, whether for retirement, succession planning, or selling to new entrepreneurs. By making these licenses non-transferable—except for specific exceptions—the city is effectively devaluing these businesses, making them less attractive to potential buyers. This will harm business owners who rely on the sale of their

company as a key part of their retirement plan or financial future and may even discourage investment in Placerville's business community as a whole.

Furthermore, while the stated intent of the ordinance is to protect the health and safety of our youth, the reality is that it may not achieve its goals. Tobacco use is a deeply ingrained societal issue, and pricing regulations, packaging rules, or prohibiting tobacco license transfers will not stop the use of these products. In fact, all the proposed measures are likely to drive people to purchase tobacco products in areas where regulations are less stringent, thus not addressing the core issue but simply relocating it elsewhere.

I encourage the City Council to reconsider these measures and explore alternative strategies that focus on education, cessation programs, and community outreach. These initiatives are proven to be more effective in addressing the root causes of tobacco use and can help protect our youth without harming local businesses or driving commerce away from Placerville.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust you will take these concerns seriously and find solutions that balance public health with the well-being of our community.

Sincerely,
Ashley Freitas



Ashley Freitas
Risk & Compliance Manager

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