



Board of County Commissioners

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Avon Town Council
c/o Mayor Fancher
1 Lake Street
Avon, CO 81620

Dear Mayor Fancher Avon Town Council Members,

We understand your community has been presented with a proposal to license tobacco retailers and increase the minimum sales age for tobacco products to 21, and we applaud your initiative. The comprehensive tobacco retail license you are considering fits our commitment to providing a safe, healthy place for families to thrive, where personal health and wellness are achievable for all. As Eagle County's Board of County Commissioners, we are very concerned to learn that local stores have been selling tobacco to underage youth. We know that if kids start using tobacco products, it's extremely difficult for them to quit due to the impact of nicotine on their developing brains.

The tobacco retailer license provides local law enforcement with the tools and resources necessary to meaningfully address stores in violation in the community and positively recognize those stores that are following the law. It also reduces the financial burden tobacco addiction has on all of us, who pay for increased health care and insurance costs as a result of tobacco use. Most importantly, it makes it more difficult for youth to obtain tobacco.

From 2017 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey data, we know the majority of students in our valley perceive tobacco products, including vaping devices, as easy or very easy to access, and perception correlates with experimentation and continued tobacco product use by young people. Additionally, the data this past year also illustrated the majority of our high school students under the age of 18 who smoke or vape bought their own cigarettes (60%) and vape devices (50.1%) from "brick and mortar" stores. This alarming rate of access highlights the prevalence of illegal sales and further concerns us because of the interconnectedness between substance use and mental health.

Anecdotally, we hear that our valley youth are using the popular Juul® vape device as a way to cope with stress, anxiety, and loneliness. With Juul®s widely available at local convenience stores, a perception of easy access, and inadequate state and federal compliance check measures of these stores, it is no wonder so many underage youth have bought them illegally.

We commend your leadership in adopting the life-saving policy and urge you to pass this initiative that will make our valley a great place to live for all!

Sincerely,

Kathy Chandler-Henry

Chair

Jeanne McQueeney

Commissioner

Jill H. Ryan

Commissioner