

San Francisco Board Approves Ban On Flavored Tobacco Sales

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SAN FRANCISCO (CBS SF) — Legislation restricting the sale of all flavored tobacco including menthol cigarettes was approved unanimously by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors Tuesday.

Supervisor Malia Cohen introduced the legislation targeting flavored tobacco products because they are typically marketed to vulnerable populations including children and young adults, African Americans and LGBTQ people.

“It’s no secret that flavored tobaccos are considered by many experts to be starter products,” Cohen said today. “They taste good, they mask the harsh flavor and they make it easier for people to start a lifelong habit.”

The legislation drew some protests from small business advocates who said it could hurt small corner stores that rely on tobacco and alcohol sales to turn a profit.

In response, Cohen Tuesday introduced amendments that extended the date it takes effect from Jan. 1, 2018 to April 1, 2018, to allow more time for the transition.

Cohen also said she would be interested in providing additional city assistance to stores looking for ways to revamp their offerings.

The financial cost to San Francisco in direct health care expenses and lost productivity from tobacco use is estimated at around \$380 million a year.

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