

Gautho, Julia

From: mailagent@thesoftedge.com on behalf of Oscar De La Cruz
<mailagent@thesoftedge.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 11:24 AM
To: City Council
Subject: Please Vote No on the Proposed Filtered Tobacco Ban Ordinance

Dear Council:

Harbor Liquors

I am writing today to ask you to vote against the proposed filtered tobacco ban. While I understand the environmental goals behind this ordinance, it will create severe economic hardship for gas stations and convenience stores without solving the litter problem it's meant to address.

This ban would effectively eliminate cigarette sales since nearly all cigarettes contain filters. Tobacco revenue represents approximately 30% of most convenience store sales, but the economic impact goes much deeper. While in my store tobacco customers buy additional products including fuel, beverages, and snacks during the same transaction. When they can't buy tobacco in my store, they will take their entire shopping trip elsewhere. My customers will not have more than 300 stores within a 10-mile radius that they go to purchase filtered cigarettes and other items. This isn't a matter of customers substituting other products; it's a complete loss of business for my store and stores throughout Capitola.

I have been part of the Capitola community for years, and I'm deeply concerned about the employment implications for my staff. This loss of income from tobacco sales and other items will force me to make difficult decisions about staffing levels and operating hours. These are real jobs that support local families in our community.

Rather than pursuing prohibition that will harm Capitola's local businesses without meaningful environmental benefit, I encourage the Council to consider these alternatives:

1. Install ash receptacles in strategic locations, which research shows increases proper disposal
2. Address all litter sources identified in local studies through education and waste management programs.
3. Develop comprehensive waste reduction initiatives that build on Capitola's environmental leadership while preserving business viability.

We all want a clean community, but we need solutions that work without putting people out of business. Please vote against this ban and help us find better approaches that work for both the environment and local jobs in Capitola.

Sincerely,

Oscar De La Cruz
Manager
Harbor Liquors
650 Harbor
Santa Cruz, CA 95062