



An Initiative of Minnesota Alliance With Youth

May 7, 2021

Taxes Conference Committee

RE: HF991 (Omnibus Tax Bill)

Dear Conference Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the Minnesota Youth Council. The Minnesota Youth Council is a diverse group of high school students who are representatives of each congressional district in Minnesota. We bring the voice of youth to decision makers, striving toward equity in various areas that affect youth, such as student mental health and juvenile justice, by helping with policy proposals and legislation or talking about issues that affect youth.

Thank you for taking important steps to reverse the youth tobacco epidemic and address tobacco-related health disparities. Specifically, thank you to both chambers for dedicating existing cigarette tax revenue to tobacco prevention and treatment. The House bill includes \$15 million in ongoing funding and the Senate bill includes \$5 million in one-time funding. In addition, we support closing tax loopholes on e-cigarette devices since price can be a powerful tool to reduce youth tobacco use.

The Minnesota Youth Council representatives are especially concerned that 70 percent of youth who use e-cigarettes are now showing signs of addiction. When 1 in 5 of our classmates are using e-cigarettes, this is a LOT of youth who are addicted. We must all work together to do more. The state should continue investing in proven strategies to reduce youth tobacco use and help smokers quit. If Minnesota invests in tobacco control at the same or greater levels over the next 20 years, the state will prevent an additional 14,063 smoking-attributable deaths, reduce smoking-attributable medical spending by \$10.2 billion and increase paid and unpaid productivity by \$9.4 billion.

Please protect the health of Minnesota kids by including ongoing investments in tobacco prevention and treatment efforts as included in the House proposal.

Sincerely,

Eric Li

Minnesota Youth Council Representative Congressional District 2

