



March 10, 2021

Minnesota House Preventive Health Policy Division

Re: Please support HF1721

Dear Chair Freiberg and Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of Tobacco-Free Alliance to urge you to support **HF1721**, which includes comprehensive tobacco tax changes and funding for tobacco prevention and treatment. The Tobacco-Free Alliance is a nonprofit organization with the mission to prevent youth from using commercial tobacco, prioritizing communities adversely affected by industry marketing and health disparities.

Raising commercial tobacco prices helps prevent young people from using tobacco products, helps smokers quit, and saves lives. We also urge you to end the tax break on premium cigars, tax e-cigarette devices as tobacco products, and conform to federal e-cigarette online sales rules to help our state keep pace with the ever-evolving tobacco industry.

Youth tobacco use is on the rise due to the popularity of e-cigarettes which prompted the U.S. Surgeon General to officially declare youth e-cigarette use "an epidemic." The 2020 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey found one in five high-schoolers used e-cigarettes within the past 30 days, and 70 percent of youth e-cigarette users reported signs of dependence. There is widespread concern that the e-cigarette epidemic is eroding decades of progress to reduce youth tobacco use. Investing more funds in tobacco prevention and treatment will ensure that our state does its part to reduce commercial tobacco's significant harms for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elyse Less".

Elyse Levine Less
Executive Director