

The Need For Tobacco Retail Licensure

Kids and Tobacco - The Start of a Deadly Combination

- ◆ Every day 300 California teenagers start smoking. Two hundred then become addicted smokers, and half of those will die prematurely from a tobacco-related illness.
- ◆ Over half of California youth (54.8 percent) ages 12 to 17 reported that it is easy to obtain tobacco products.
- ◆ Nearly 90 percent of all adult smokers began smoking and became addicted to tobacco before they turned 18 years old. Furthermore, studies show that the younger a person starts smoking, the more difficult it is to quit.

Too Many California Retailers Still Illegally Sell Tobacco to Kids

- ◆ Studies demonstrate that older youth (ages 16 to 17), youth who lie about their age, and youth who frequent a store repeatedly are more likely to be sold tobacco.
- ◆ Stores must take their responsibility to verify the age of tobacco purchasers seriously.
- ◆ Policies that require a license or permit to sell tobacco products are necessary, common sense steps to combat teen smoking.
- ◆ When part of a comprehensive and coordinated tobacco control program, licensing and related enforcement are very cost-effective measures for saving lives.

Justification for a Licensing Ordinance in the City of San Luis Obispo

- ◆ In a recent tobacco sting conducted by the Tobacco Control Program and San Luis Obispo Police Department, more than 50 percent of the stores in San Luis Obispo were cited for selling tobacco products to a minor.
- ◆ Licensing is essential to identifying tobacco retailers. Tobacco products can be purchased at a large variety of businesses including doughnut shops, coffee houses, and ice cream and canteen trucks, which kids may frequent but which are not usually subject to routine enforcement activities.
- ◆ Tobacco is the only addictive and potentially deadly product that can be sold without a license.
- ◆ California requires a license to sell many other products such as prescription drugs and alcohol, but cigarettes can be sold without one.
- ◆ The threat of license suspension and revocation is significant motivation for compliance with tobacco laws.