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Retailers Urged to Stop the Sale and Marketing of Flavored Tobacco

PENSACOLA – The Board of County Commissioners of Escambia County has passed a resolution urging tobacco retailers to stop the sale and marketing of flavored tobacco products in Escambia County.

Through the efforts of Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT), the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program of the Escambia County Health Department, and the Healthy Environments are Tobacco-Free (HEAT) Partnership, the resolution was adopted on June 16.

Tobacco companies use youth-oriented, colorful and stylish packaging to exploit adolescents' attraction to candy-flavored tobacco with names such as "mandarin mint", "winter warm toffee", and "twista chill". The United States Surgeon General asserts that adolescent experimentation with smoking can be directly attributed to tobacco advertising and promotional activities.

"We have spent countless hours educating students and the general public about the deceptive and deadly nature of these products," said Vanessa Phillips, tobacco prevention coordinator for the Escambia County Health Department. "By passing this resolution, the County Commissioners are making a major statement showing that they care about protecting the health and future of Escambia County youth."

Last year, a Florida Youth Tobacco survey was conducted to obtain a representative sample of middle school and high school students' access to tobacco, their tobacco-related beliefs, attitudes and behaviors, and their exposures to pro-tobacco and anti-tobacco influences. The results indicated that the estimated number of students using tobacco were 3,752, with 871 of those being middle school students.

Phillips said that the SWAT youth received 450 signatures of support from concerned registered voters in Escambia County who also wanted a ban on the sale and advertising of flavored tobacco products.

"The Students Working Against Tobacco made a very impressive presentation to the Board of County Commissioners. As a result, we were happy to support them with this resolution," said Kevin White, Chairman of the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners.

Flavored tobacco products are defined as loose tobacco including snuff flour, plug and twist tobacco, fine cuts, chewing tobacco, snus, smoking and snuffing tobacco products such as cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco products and blunt wraps.

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