

Good evening, Mayor Andersen and City Council, my name is Icela Velazquez, and I am the President of the Youth Advisory Council at Eden Youth. I am a student at Mt. Eden High School, and I would like to provide supporting evidence regarding the end of commercial tobacco product sales in the City of Piedmont.

California only banned the sale of most flavored tobacco after many cities and counties across the state had already done so through local ordinances. While a top-down solution would be nice, we know that local action can lead to broader change. Four California cities have already ended the sale of all tobacco products in their stores; Piedmont can be the fifth in the state to make this bold move towards public health and motivate others to follow-suit. Ending tobacco sales would not prohibit the possession, use, or purchase of tobacco products in Piedmont.

Just as Piedmont does not have cannabis dispensaries but does not prohibit individuals from using cannabis, stopping stores from selling tobacco would only regulate the retail environment, not punish individuals for using tobacco. The intent of this policy is to remove the tobacco industry's presence from Piedmont, rather than criminalize individuals for being addicted to its products. In summary, I ask that the city council take action by ending the sale of commercial tobacco products in Piedmont. Thank you!