

All flavorings, including menthol, should be prohibited in all commercial tobacco and nicotine products.

A policy to end the sales of menthol cigarettes nationwide could save 650,000 lives in the U.S., including over 250,000 Black lives.

REDUCE INITIATION

Flavored tobacco products are commonly the first nicotine products used by youth.

- Nearly 80% of high school and middle school students who currently use tobacco use a flavored product.
- **81% of teens age 12-17 who ever used a tobacco product used a flavored product first.**
- Most commonly used flavor types among high school students are fruit, mint, menthol, and candy/sweet.

MAKE QUITTING EASIER

Menthol and other cooling, numbing additives make it easier to inhale, harder to quit.

- Menthol and similar additives reduce the irritation from smoking and nicotine, making menthol products more appealing to new and young users.
- **Menthol flavoring contributes to greater nicotine dependence** due to the unique impacts of menthol on airways and brain receptors.
- 50% of teens age 12-17 who smoke use menthol cigarettes.

PROTECT COMMUNITIES

Menthol cigarettes & tobacco products disproportionately harm people of color and LGBTQ people.

- All other flavored cigarettes were banned in 2009.
- **The tobacco industry targets communities of color and LGBTQ+ communities with menthol products, particularly the Black community.**
- About 85% of Black smokers use menthol products.
- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among Black Americans. Lung cancer death rates in Black males are 15% higher than those of white males. Prohibiting menthol tobacco products could close that gap in about 5 years.
- In 2020, 54% of lesbian & gay smokers and 49% of bisexual smokers used menthol, compared with 42% of heterosexual smokers.

Learn more about flavors & menthol



Our data sources are online at bit.ly/WaFlavorsDataSources

PROHIBITING FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS: KEY COMPONENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE & EQUITABLE POLICY



Prohibit all flavors and chemical additives

that produce a taste, odor, or a cooling or numbing sensation other than tobacco flavor.

Prohibit any nicotine product marketed as having a flavor or smell.



Prohibit flavored and cooling additives in all commercial tobacco and nicotine products that can be inhaled, consumed, or ingested

including cigarettes, vapor products/e-cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, hookah tobacco, oral nicotine pouches, dissolvable nicotine products, chewing tobacco, and snuff.



No enforcement actions or penalties on individuals

for buying, using, or possessing any flavored commercial tobacco product, including menthol cigarettes.

Store clerks and employees should be educated, not fined.

Enforcement actions on tobacco manufacturers, distributors, and retail store owners

for selling any prohibited flavored products.

Use warnings and graduated fines for retailers.

Provide clear compliance and enforcement authority for state agencies and local health departments.

Learn more on our **Eliminate Flavors** webpage: bit.ly/WaFlavors

Data sources: bit.ly/WaFlavorsDataSources



Washington Breathes is a statewide coalition working to eliminate the harms of commercial tobacco use. This statement was developed by the Policy Workgroup and approved by the coalition's Steering Committee.

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