

Photo Survey of Predatory Marketing Strategies for Flavored Tobacco Promotions in 2 Stores in Unincorporated Mendocino County Within Close Vicinity to Ukiah, California.

Convenience Store 1

Flavored Tobacco/e-Cigarette Products and Devices Display Location:

Prominent plexiglass displays of colorfully packaged products on cash register table next to cashier.

Proximity to Candy and Snacks:

E-cigarette product displays at eye level of a child and within 3 feet of self-service jerky dispensary and shelf with candies (Mike & Ikes).

Some flavors prominently features: JUUL- Menthol, Pop Bars- Iced Blue Raz, Iced Pineapple, Mighty Mint, Banana Ice, Honey Dew Strawberry Apple, Watermelon Lemonade, Pineapple Strawberry Coconut, Peach Lemonade.





Convenience Store 2

Flavored Tobacco/e-Cigarette Products and Devices Display Location:

Plexiglass displays strategically placed between two cashier stations.

Proximity to Snacks:

Display within inches of self-service jerky dispensary and hot food display.

Some flavors prominently featured: Puff Bar- Lychee Ice, Banana Ice, Melon Ice. Pop Bars- Honey Dew Strawberry Apple, Watermelon Lemonade, Grape Pop, Lychee, Kiwi.



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Significance of Findings

The purpose of this photo survey was not to provide a comprehensive story of flavored tobacco retailing in Mendocino County. The purpose is to offer a succinct visual example of how many retailers regionally use Big Tobacco point of sale marketing practices to hook local youth. These and other stores were visited in unincorporated Ukiah Valley (non-tribal sovereign nation neighborhoods) on Oct. 2nd, 2020. Similar findings are not included here due to redundancy.

The move by more and more mom and pop corner stores and liquor and fuel station convenience stores to adopt large plexiglass display cases filled with e-cigarette products is a strategic tactic directed by the Big Tobacco industry which spends \$1 Million an hour on average on marketing. What better way to advertise the tantalizing sweet and sugary nicotine products than using the colorful, dramatically labeled and branded products themselves, lined up, near the register, and near candy and snacks. The end result is that these display cases become an intrinsic part of any customer's and any accompanying child's experience to purchasing anything in such stores. Proximity to the cashier, colorful products with tantalizing titles like "Honey Dew Strawberry Apple" visually norms these highly addictive flavored tobacco products/nicotine vapes as part of the convenience store experience. Seeing flavored tobacco products when buying anything in these stores has become as inescapable and familiar to the customer as the candy and gum is in front of the cashier. Meanwhile cigarettes and chewing tobacco are often relegated out of the way behind the retailer on display shelves. This is no accident. As cigarette use declines, Big Tobacco knows the key to protecting long term profits is ensuring teens get hooked on nicotine and know where to get it easily. Strategic point of sale location of e-cigarette products appealing to youth in the midst of a teen vaping epidemic is no accident. Therefore it is no mystery why so many youth use local tobacco retailers as their source for these products. This is why so many California and Bay Area jurisdictions are restricting or banning flavored tobacco products as an effective way to curtail youth initiation to these products designed to hook them.

This overview was prepared and submitted by Greg Damron, Co-Chair of the Sonoma County Tobacco Free Community Coalition in support of the Mendocino County Tobacco Prevention Coalition.