

# COMMERCIAL TOBACCO AND RECREATIONAL CANNABIS



Commercial tobacco prevention and treatment advocates have worked for many years to implement policies that reduce the burden of commercial tobacco and address tobacco-related health disparities in all Minnesota communities.

There are many public health lessons and policies learned from commercial tobacco work that the legislature can consider in 2024 to amend the recreational cannabis law to promote public health, protect kids, and advance health equity

## CANNABIS AND THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

- Tobacco companies are investing heavily in the cannabis industry (NYT, 2018). This is concerning given what we know about the tobacco industry’s predatory marketing practices that target youth, low-income communities, and communities of color (Truth, 2021).
- Altria (Philip Morris - Marlboro) is a founding member of the Coalition for Cannabis Policy, Education, and Regulation, a coalition focused on federal cannabis regulation that provides lawmakers with ‘trusted, science-driven resources.’
- The tobacco industry has worked hard to weaken smoke-free air laws in other states.
- The cannabis industry is borrowing from Big Tobacco’s Playbook by:
  - Manipulating potency thereby increasing the risk of addiction and psychosis, similar to manipulating nicotine levels.
  - Creating flavored and other highly appealing products aimed at attracting young people[1] and masking the harshness of a product.
  - Targeted and misleading marketing of products “and masking the harshness of the product.”

## CANNABIS POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

### PROHIBIT THE SALE OF FLAVORED CANNABIS THAT IS BURNED, INHALED, OR VAPORIZED

- Cannabis policy should be established with protections for children, young people, low-income communities, and communities of color.
- We know that the tobacco industry has long used flavored products to attract kids and to target communities of color. This tactic makes their products more appealing and seemingly less harmful. We cannot allow the cannabis industry to replicate these tactics because we know the immense public health impact they have.
- Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation supports legislation to prohibit the sale of flavored cannabis that is burned, inhaled, or vaporized *without penalties for purchase, use, or possession.*



Photo Credit: ANSR Minnesota



## MAINTAIN STRONG CLEAN INDOOR AIR

- Smoke is smoke. Smoke from cannabis contains many of the same toxins, irritants and carcinogens as found in tobacco smoke and secondhand smoke can be a serious health hazard (Marijuana and Lung Health, 2021).
- Minnesotans expect and deserve the right to breathe clean air in indoor spaces. Minnesota's Clean Indoor Air Act prohibits the use of all heated and combustible products intended for inhalation, including tobacco, nicotine, cannabis and other smoking and aerosol products in all workplaces where cigarette smoking is already prohibited.
- Burned, inhaled, or vaporized cannabinoid products (recreational or medicinal) should not be used where smoking is prohibited, following state and local clean indoor air laws and ordinances.
- Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation supports legislation to ensure all public workplaces, including cannabis retailers, follow state and local clean-indoor air laws to ensure no rollbacks of existing clean indoor air.

## CANNABIS, COMMERCIAL TOBACCO, AND SMOKE-FREE HOUSING

- Secondhand smoke (whether from commercial tobacco or cannabis) disproportionately impacts children, low wage earners, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. All Minnesotans deserve the right to breathe clean air at home.
- Enforcement of smoke-free multiunit housing policies should balance the goal of protecting residents from secondhand and thirdhand smoke exposure with the goal of ensuring housing stability for all residents.
- It is pertinent that property owners, managers, common interest communities, and local jurisdictions have the authority to adopt smoke-free policies (stronger than current state law) that prohibit the smoking of cannabis and commercial tobacco products in and on multi-unit housing property to protect residents, staff, and guests from harmful secondhand exposure.
- MSFG Recommendation:
  - Replace 'multifamily housing' with 'multiunit residence' and 'Multiunit residence means a building or portion thereof designed or used for residential occupancy by two or more households in separate dwelling units.' [Smoke-free multiunit housing ordinance](#) (Public Health Law Center)
  - Revise \$250 fine to ability to pay, community service, or other noncriminal sanctions.
  - Local jurisdictions should be allowed to regulate smoke-free housing, even if the smoke-free housing provision is removed. Local regulations should include guardrails to protect housing stability and ensure any local action does not include criminal sanctions.