

From: [Blythe Young](#)
To: [City Clerk Dept User](#)
Subject: Letter re Item P.2 Tobacco Retail License Ordinance for February 24th Agenda
Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 10:37:08 AM
Attachments: [image003.png](#)
[FINAL signed Richmond CA TRL AHA Support Letter Feb 24 26 NR.pdf](#)

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Please see attached letter regarding item P.2

Thank you,
Blythe



Blythe Young

Region Sr. Lead, Community Government Relations

American Heart Association

O 7078344399 | M 7078344399



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Bay Area Division
1111 Broadway, Suite 1360
Oakland, CA
www.heart.org

February 24th, 2026

Richmond City Council
440 Civic Center Plaza
Richmond, CA 94804

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

The American Heart Association supports the proposed update to Richmond's Tobacco Retail License Ordinance (TRL), and we respectfully ask for the addition of three policy elements:

- A statement that any fines or monetary penalties apply to the owner/licensee such as: "Any administrative fine shall be imposed solely against the license holder, not their employees or agents"
- A clear statement that enforcement applies to the license holder not individuals who purchase, use or possess tobacco products.
- The restriction of flavored tobacco products without exemption. SB793 was a great first step, but local jurisdictions can and should go further.

These edits are consistent with best practices and will truly make Richmond's policy comprehensive. We ask that you include these changes.

A policy is only as strong as enforcement and flavored tobacco restriction needs a strong TRL to be effective. Strong TRLs include: a fee that includes administrative and compliance monitoring to cover the total cost of enforcement, a minimum number of compliance checks per year with rechecks upon violation, an escalating fine/suspension penalty structure that applies to the owner/licensee and a clear statement that enforcement applies to the license holder not individuals who purchase, use or possess tobacco products.

The tobacco industry is actively and aggressively working to addict a new generation of young people, particularly those from communities of color, with flavored tobacco products. Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States, claiming on average 480,000 lives each year.

Updating Richmond's TRL to include 2026 best practices for compliance, implementation and a full restriction on flavored tobacco products will help protect our community from tobacco addiction and is crucial to preventing tobacco-related death and disease. The American Heart Association respectfully asks for your support of this vital health policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole Rosendale".

Nicole Rosendale, MD

Associate Professor of Neurology, UCSF
President, AHA Bay Area Board of Directors

From: Liz Hendrix
To: [City Clerk Dept User](#)
Cc: [Eduardo Martinez](#); [Jamelia Brown](#); [Cesar Zepeda](#); [Doria Robinson](#); [Soheila Bana](#); [Sue Wilson](#); [Claudia Jimenez](#)
Subject: Public Comments Agenda Item #P2 Tobacco Retailer License Amendments
Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 8:58:24 AM

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Dear Mayor Martinez, Vice Mayor Robinson, and esteemed Members of the City Council,

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) commends the city of Richmond for updating certain provisions in the city's new Tobacco Retailer License (TRL) in Chapter 7.106 of the city's municipal code, however, we have strong concerns regarding some of the amendments. Specifically, ACS CAN is concerned with:

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The amendment to allow for the sale of flavored shisha, thereby rolling back provisions in Richmond's current TRL prohibiting the sale of ALL flavored tobacco products

*

The lack of license suspension and revocation after multiple violations of a TRL

*

Certain definitions used in the ordinance, specifically the definitions of "Tobacco Product", Flavored Tobacco Product", "Characterizing Flavor" and "Drug Store".

We urge the Council to revisit these issues before approving the amendments to Chapter 7.106 of the city's municipal code and ensure that the amendments follow best practices for tobacco prevention.

Best,

Liz Hendrix

<https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=http%3a%2f%2ffightcancer.org%2f&c=E.1.uHTS_eESzBeWhXRnZ6CPxREGEK7s4rvlABY5yBqeR6D2RalQ-MTsoTX5P2xbxuLUK6VIYx_oAKtQVje6UUAXs_gZ45-Ftd5RUseqNHdwxawK2vObJ9AANg.&typo=1>

Liz Hendrix | She/Her

Government Relations Director, Northern California

916.504.2470

Sacramento, CA

fightcancer.org <https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=http%3a%2f%2ffightcancer.org%2f&c=E.1.BMLC2-ai7Wc6BFYwJOi-HfOln6YF_DLbs5erM45LG2ibN7ljmDdCfsBywJj4iDEXD_XpYFyYEXtmSNKSUvrKDKGnRs0GjaL5eu23-fBeP-sT&typo=1> | 1.800.227.2345

Liz Hendrix | Government Relations Director
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Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Name	Email	Comment	Position	Status	Attachment
<input type="checkbox"/> City Council							
2/24/2026 4:00 PM	OPEN FORUM FOR PUBLIC COMMENT	Natalia Vasquez		<p>Hello, Good evening, Mayor Martinez and council members. My name is Natalia Vasquez, a student at Richmond high school. This issue matters to me because I've seen many students at my school vape and struggle to stop. What starts as a curiosity quickly turns into a dependence. Through my data collection I have found that many students start vaping due to their environment sparking interest. Many don't know how much harm they are causing themselves. We are asking for preventative measures. We need enforced policies that reduce access especially to flavored products that target youth. One of our most concerning findings was how students are getting vaping products. When asked how they got their last vaping product, most students answered through a "plug" meaning someone who</p>	No Position	Approved	-

supplies the product. This is alarming because it shows how easily minors are accessing nicotine. We also found that vaping is strongly influenced by social norms. Most students who took our survey said they do not vape themselves, but they have many friends who do. This shows that vaping spreads through peer influence, not just individual choice. Another major finding was that 20.3% of Richmond High students reported starting vaping because of boredom. That statistic is important. It tells us this is not just a nicotine issue it's also about engagement and prevention. When students lack structured activities or positive outlets, they are more likely to experiment with harmful habits. Nicotine use during adolescence can affect focus, mood, and long-term brain development. If we want to address youth vaping, we need stronger prevention efforts, enforcement of access restrictions, and more supportive alternatives for

students. Our research shows this is not an isolated issue, it is a community issue. Thank you for your time and for prioritizing student health.

2/24/2026 4:00 PM	OPEN FORUM FOR PUBLIC COMMENT	Natalia Vasquez	<p>Hello, Good evening, Mayor Martinez and council members. My name is Natalia Vasquez, a student at Richmond high school. This issue matters to me because I've seen many students at my school vape and struggle to stop. What starts as a curiosity quickly turns into a dependence. Through my data collection I have found that many students start vaping due to their environment sparking interest. Many don't know how much harm they are causing themselves. We are asking for preventative measures. We need enforced policies that reduce access especially to flavored products that target youth. One of our most concerning findings was how students are getting vaping products. When asked how they got their last vaping product, most students</p>	No Position	Approved	-
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and more supportive alternatives for students. Our research shows this is not an isolated issue, it is a community issue. Thank you for your time and for prioritizing student health.

2/24/2026 4:00 PM	Tobacco Retailer License Amendments	Ben	Thank you for your concern around this topic and for considering my comment. I work in Richmond and am a proud contributor to our community. While I fully support the city looking into the "Tobacco Retailer" licensing and best practices, I do not think that the current proposed updates I was able to read online are a sufficient deterrent. These fines can amount to one profitable transaction for these establishments. New York City had a very successful program that involved license suspensions, but also had enough teeth to physically lock the businesses, essentially evicting the tenants and depriving the landlords of rent income. I would encourage you to look at a program like that to have true deterrent to the underground illicit markets that are	For	Approved	-
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operating at certain
bad actors in our
smoke shop
community.
