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Press Release

For Release: Immediately

Date: June 16, 2022

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City of Scotts Valley Bans Flavored Tobacco Products, Smoking in Outdoor Dining Areas

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY – The Scotts Valley City Council voted to ban the sale of flavored tobacco products in the city during its June 15 meeting. The ban covers tobacco products with “a taste or smell other than the taste or smell of tobacco,” including candy and fruit-flavored electronic smoking devices or e-cigs. With its passage, Santa Cruz County becomes the second county in California to have equal protections against the sale of these products across all jurisdictions. The Council also prohibited smoking in outdoor dining areas.

“I’m grateful to the Council for their commitment to these issues,” said Rachel Kippen, Co-Chair of the Santa Cruz County Tobacco Education Coalition. The Coalition works closely with the Tobacco Education and Prevention Program at the Health Services Agency Public Health Division on education and advocacy related to tobacco and public health. “Scotts Valley City leaders began this important work in 2020 but were interrupted by the Covid pandemic and the CZU Lightning Complex Fire. In spite of these challenges, Council members found time to prioritize the health of Scotts Valley residents. The Coalition commends them for this important step in breaking the cycle of nicotine addiction.”

According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, 80% of young people who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product. Products such as e-cigarettes, little cigars, and smokeless tobacco use flavors like gummy bear, chocolate, and cotton candy to appeal to youth. Flavors mask the harsh taste of tobacco and keep new users smoking long enough to get them hooked.

“It has been alarming to see the growing popularity of flavored tobacco products, especially electronic devices or vapes,” wrote Tanya Krause, Superintendent of the Scotts Valley Unified School District, in a letter to the Council. “We see these products every day in our classrooms, on our playgrounds, in gathering areas, and in our student restrooms. As an educator, I am particularly worried about the impact of nicotine on the developing brain.”

Kippen also called smoke-free outdoor dining “good for health and good for business.” According to the California Adult Tobacco Survey, 84% of Californians, including 66% of smokers, prefer dining in smoke-free restaurants with outdoor dining areas.

Both policies will go into effect on July 15, 2022.