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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES NEW MILESTONE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST E-CIGARETTE RETAILERS SELLING TO MINORS

The City reaches new settlements with 16 e-cigarette retailers, generating over \$500,000

CHICAGO—Mayor Lori Lightfoot, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP), Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Department of Law today announced that the City of Chicago has entered into settlements with 16 e-cigarette retailers. The settlements require the retailers to pay \$549,800 in fines after the City identified illegal sales and marketing of these products to minors.

“The City of Chicago is committed and determined to protect the health and safety of all of our children,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “The agreements reached with these retailers will ensure that Chicago’s youth will be unable to purchase tobacco products, and they will no longer be targeted by harmful advertisements of big tobacco companies seeking to hook their newest customers.”

The City announced lawsuits against online retailers of e-cigarettes and ‘e-juices’ for selling their products to Chicago youth in November 2018. The lawsuit was filed after BACP conducted a sting operation that found 8 online retailers selling products directly to an underage resident. Following similar stings conducted this year, the City has filed lawsuits against 28 additional e-cigarette retailers and served notices of violation on 17 more.

As a result of the lawsuits, many of the settling retailers have agreed to stop selling their products into Chicago. Some have agreed to enhance the age verification on their websites and implement “age gating” that restricts underage access to retailers’ social media. Others have agreed to eliminate the use of cartoon characters, certain social-media “influencers,” and underage models in their marketing tactics. And others have agreed to add health warnings to their advertisements and eliminate words like “candy” and “gummy” from their product descriptions.



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“We’re pleased that our lawsuits have been effective in punishing retailers for their illegal actions,” said Corporation Counsel Mark Flessner. “The agreements reached with these retailers will send a signal as we continue to prevent companies from enticing youth to buy these harmful products in the first place.”

In addition to the lawsuits, in November BACP cited 15 Chicago-based retail stores who were caught selling e-cigarette products to underage Chicago residents, and sent letters to 33 retailers and manufacturers who were believed to be engaging in unlawful and deceptive marketing tactics. The City is committed to investigating online retailers to ensure any e-cigarettes sales in Chicago are done in full compliance.

“We are determined to prevent Chicago’s youth from getting their hands on tobacco products of any type,” said BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareno. “These lawsuits have been successful in sending a message that we will not tolerate unlawful business practices and deceptive marketing that targets young people, while fundamentally changing how these retailers do business in Chicago.”

“The City is committed to protecting the health of our residents, especially Chicago’s youth,” said Acting Commissioner of CDPH Alison Arwady. “We will fight back against any marketing tactics by Big Tobacco and work to keep children healthy and safe.”

The settlements were reached with the following retailers:

1. Beard Vape Co, LLC and BCC Distribution, LLC
2. BGW Manufacturing Inc. d/b/a The Sauce LA
3. BodyRock Products, LLC
4. Hype City Vapors, LLC
5. LA E-Juice d/b/a Five Star Juice
6. Major League Vaping
7. Mig Vapor
8. Mountain Vapors, LLC
9. One Up Vapor, LLC
10. Purecigs, LLC d/b/a ELiquid Depot
11. Sex Vapor
12. Smoker’s Outlet Online, Inc.
13. TWEL USA, Inc. d/b/a Totally Wicked E-Liquid
14. Twist Vapor Franchising, LLC d/b/a Sea100
15. VapeMasterz
16. Vista Vapors, Inc.



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The City has long been a leader in the fight against tobacco. Chicago was the first of the 20 largest U.S. cities to propose legislation to include e-cigarettes in their clean indoor air law. The City Council has taken legislative action to prevent tobacco use by minors by requiring health risk signs on the doors of tobacco stores, and by banning sales of certain tobacco products within 500 feet of schools. Additionally, the *Chicago Clean Indoor Air Act* prohibits smoking as well as vaping in virtually all enclosed public places.

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