

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 5, 2017

Chairman Robert Aderholt
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Sanford Bishop
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Bishop:

As your subcommittee begins to craft the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we urge you to protect kids' health by not including any policy riders that would weaken FDA's authority to regulate tobacco products and by approving the authorized level of user fees that will enable FDA to effectively regulate these products.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in our nation, each year leading to more than 480,000 premature deaths. Sixteen million American are currently living with a tobacco-caused disease. More than 36 million Americans currently smoke, and tobacco use is responsible for approximately \$170 billion in health care costs each year. More than 60 percent of tobacco-related health care costs are paid by government programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. Ninety percent of smokers started smoking when they were teenagers; smokers who do not begin smoking by their early 20's are unlikely to ever start. Nearly 70 percent of adult smokers want to quit.

Last year FDA took a critical step to protect children and public health by issuing a final rule that will enable the agency to begin to oversee e-cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products that had previously been outside of FDA's authority. With the high rates of use of these products among youth, the need for FDA oversight of these products is clear.

A recent U.S. Surgeon General report offered the government's first comprehensive review of the public health impact of e-cigarettes on youth and young adults. The report found that youth e-cigarette use now exceeds traditional cigarette use and that e-cigarettes are the most commonly used tobacco product among youth. The report highlighted flavors as a leading reason why youth use e-cigarettes and noted that the aerosol generated by an e-cigarette can contain harmful and potentially harmful constituents, including nicotine. The Surgeon General found that youth use of products containing nicotine, in any form, can cause addiction, harm the developing brain, and impede learning and attention.

Similar to e-cigarettes, cigars are being marketed in a range of flavors that appeal to kids, such as candy, fruit, and chocolate. Nearly three fourths of current youth cigar smokers say flavors attract them to smoking the product. Each day, more than 2,100 kids under age 18 try smoking

cigars for the first time. High schools boys now smoke cigars at a higher rate than cigarettes – 14 percent for cigars and 11.8 percent for cigarettes.

The House FY 17 Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA and Related Agencies appropriations bill included two policy riders that would weaken FDA’s authority to oversee tobacco products and its ability to protect children’s health. The first policy rider sought to completely exempt certain cigars from FDA regulation. The other rider sought to exempt thousands of e-cigarettes, cigars, and other recently regulated tobacco products from an important product review requirement, taking away a powerful and efficient tool to protect children from the candy- and fruit-flavored e-cigarettes and cigars.

We respectfully request that you refrain from including any policy riders in the FY 2018 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Related Agencies appropriations bill that would undermine FDA’s authority to oversee tobacco products and urge you to approve the authorized level of user fees to ensure that FDA has the resources to protect kids and public health.

Sincerely,



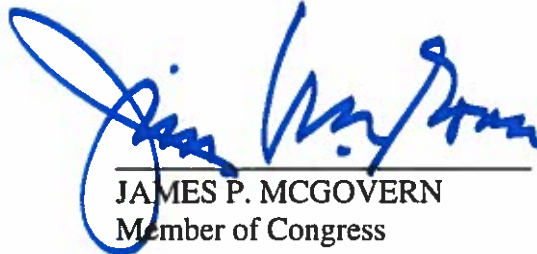
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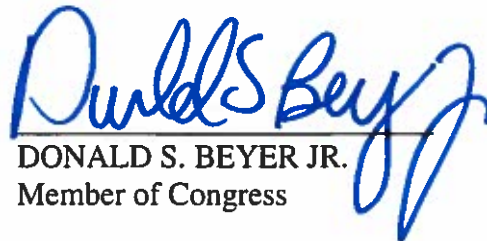

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