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Contra Costa County
Board of Supervisors

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Mark DeSaulnier
Supervisor, District IV

Clayton, Clyde, Concord, Pacheco, Pleasant Hill
Walnut Creek

November 8, 2004

Debra Kelly
Vice President, Government Relations
American Lung Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties
2750 Fourth Avenue
San Diego, CA 92103

Dear Ms. Kelley:

As we discussed recently, Contra Costa County has a long tradition of implementing strong tobacco control policies to stop the illegal sale of tobacco to minors.

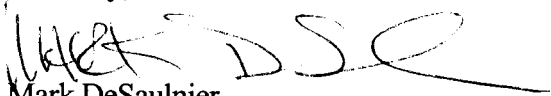
In 1998, the Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance, proposed by the California Grocers Association, requiring only retailers who violate local and state tobacco control laws to obtain a license to sell tobacco. Representatives from the California Grocers Association, along with member retailers from Contra Costa County, testified at Board meetings that local retailers would not sell tobacco to minors under the proposed ordinance.

Despite these promises, the Contra Costa County Sheriffs Department found in 2001 that an astounding 37% of Contra Costa County retailers were indeed selling tobacco to minors. The Board of Supervisors acted quickly to solve this problem by adopting an ordinance requiring **all** tobacco retailers to obtain a license to sell tobacco.

Since implementation of this ordinance in 2002, the rate of illegal tobacco sales to minors has fallen from 37% to under 10%. I attribute this dramatic improvement to the licensing ordinance which holds **all** retailers accountable for tobacco sales to minors; requires compliance with all federal, state and local tobacco control laws as a condition of the license; imposes meaningful penalties on repeated violators including license suspension and revocation; and fully funds the cost administering and enforcing the program through the license fee.

Contra Costa County is proud to have taken a leadership role in protecting our kids from the deadly addiction of tobacco.

Sincerely,


Mark DeSaulnier