



July 7, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger:

As your committee proceeds to mark up the Fiscal Year 2021 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to oppose any efforts to weaken FDA's authority over cigars or any other tobacco products.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States. More than 480,000 Americans die from tobacco use each year, and more than 16 million Americans are currently living with a tobacco-caused disease. With the enactment of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act in 2009, Congress recognized that all tobacco products should be overseen by an agency with expertise in assessing health risks and experience promulgating science-based regulation.

Over the years, manufacturers and sellers of tobacco products have sought to exclude certain products from FDA's authority or weaken FDA oversight of them, including through the appropriations process. Fortunately, Congress has not restricted FDA's statutory authority. All

tobacco products pose risks to health and should adhere to science-based public health protections. As our nation confronts the COVID-19 pandemic – a pandemic that impacts the lungs and has taken the lives of more than 100,000 Americans – surely now is not the time to weaken FDA oversight of tobacco products.

Manufacturers and sellers of certain types of cigars have argued that their products should not be overseen by FDA despite the agency’s determination that there is no appropriate public health justification for exempting them. While cigar smoking is often perceived as an activity of older adults, cigars are popular among youth, particularly high school boys. Cigars are marketed in a wide array of flavors and are often inexpensive, making them especially appealing to youth. Despite industry claims to the contrary, cigar use has serious negative health risks and can lead to lung and heart diseases and numerous types of cancer. FDA has determined that all cigars are potentially addictive and that cigar use leads to approximately 9,000 premature deaths each year.

We urge you to oppose any amendments to weaken FDA’s authority over cigars including an amendment that would add language that was adopted during the Energy and Commerce Committee’s consideration of H.R. 2339, the Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act, that would have exempted certain cigars from having to undergo a public health review by FDA. Our organizations opposed this amendment when it was added to H.R. 2339 because it would restrict an important tool FDA now has to protect public health. Despite our opposition to this amendment, we continued to support the bill because other parts of the legislation – including a prohibition on all flavored tobacco products – would substantially reduce youth tobacco use and greatly benefit public health. That would not be the case if a similar amendment were adopted by this Committee.

In passing the Tobacco Control Act, Congress wisely recognized the addictive and deadly nature of tobacco products and the critical need for manufacturers to demonstrate that new products are “appropriate for the protection of public health.” Given their risks to health, no tobacco product should be exempt from FDA product review.

We thank you for not adopting any provisions during consideration of the FY 2020 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill that would weaken FDA oversight of tobacco products, and we urge you to once again oppose any efforts to exempt cigars or any other tobacco products from FDA oversight during consideration of the FY 2021 bill.

Sincerely,

Action on Smoking & Health  
African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council  
Allergy & Asthma Network  
American Academy of Nursing  
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology  
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology  
American Academy of Otolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery

American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association for Cancer Research  
American Association for Dental Research  
American Association for Respiratory Care  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American College of Cardiology  
American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST)  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American Heart Association  
American Lung Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
American Thoracic Society  
Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights  
Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL)  
Association for Clinical Oncology  
Association of Black Cardiologists  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
Cancer Prevention and Treatment Fund  
Catholic Health Association of the United States  
ClearWay Minnesota  
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions is America (CADCA)  
COPD Foundation  
Eta Sigma Gamma – National Health Education Honorary  
LUNgevity Foundation  
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network  
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Black Nurses Association  
National Education Association  
National Network of Public Health Institutes  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Parents Against Vaping E-Cigarettes (PAVe)  
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions  
Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD)  
The Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education  
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

CC: United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations Members