



June 17, 2014

Dear Senator:

We are writing to express our strong opposition to any amendment to the FY 2015 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations bill that would exempt any type of cigar from regulation under the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, P.L. 111-31, or would impede the current rulemaking process the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has initiated to determine the appropriate level of oversight for tobacco products not currently regulated by the agency. We believe the FDA should retain the authority to regulate all tobacco products, including cigars, and should be permitted to use a science-based process for determining those regulations. Products containing tobacco cause disease and should not be exempted from oversight by the agency.

While the health risks of cigar smoking are not the same as cigarette smoking, cigar smoke is composed of the same toxic and carcinogenic constituents found in cigarette smoke. According to the National Cancer Institute, cigar smoking causes cancer of the oral cavity, larynx, esophagus and lung, and cigar smokers are at increased risk for an aortic aneurysm. Daily cigar smokers, particularly those who inhale, have an increased risk of heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Cigar smoking is not limited to adults; it is the second most common form of tobacco use among youth. According to national surveys, 16.5 percent of high school boys currently smoke cigars (i.e., large cigars, cigarillos, and small cigars),¹ and each day more than 2,700 youth under 18 years old try cigar smoking for the first time.² Young adults (e.g., 15.9 percent of 18 to 24 year olds) are also much more likely to be cigar smokers than older adults (e.g., 4.9 percent of 45 to 64 year olds).³

FDA has just issued a proposed rule to regulate cigars and other unregulated tobacco products. FDA is seeking public comment about whether all cigars should be regulated by FDA or whether “premium cigars” should be exempted from FDA oversight. During this rulemaking process, FDA will need to assess the available science concerning the health risks of smoking cigars and who smokes different kinds of cigars.

We oppose any amendment that would interfere with the current rulemaking process, prevent a science-based decision-making process, and place a broad category of cigars beyond the reach of FDA. An amendment to exclude certain types of cigars would prevent FDA from implementing even basic common-sense rules such as requiring manufacturers to report what ingredients are contained in their products.

With strong bipartisan support, in 2009 Congress gave FDA authority over the manufacture, sale and marketing of all tobacco products. Congress gave the FDA the flexibility to determine the type of regulation that is appropriate for different tobacco products. While the Act immediately applied all of FDA’s new authorities to cigarettes, cigarette tobacco, roll-your-own tobacco, and smokeless tobacco, it established a process for the Secretary of Health and Human Services to assert jurisdiction over other tobacco products, including cigars, and determine which requirements are appropriate for the protection of public health. Maintaining FDA’s current authority will ensure that any proposal about cigars is based on science and will be open to participation by all interested parties through Notice and Comment rulemaking.

¹ U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2013,” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* 63(No. 4), June 13, 2014.

² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Detailed Tables*, 2013.

³ King, BA, et al., “Current Tobacco Use Among Adults in the United States: Findings from the National Adult Tobacco Survey,” *American Journal of Public Health*, September 20, 2012.

Our organizations strongly urge you to oppose any amendment to exempt a type of cigar from regulation or impede the current rulemaking process for establishing oversight of currently unregulated tobacco products.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Cancer Research
American Association for Respiratory Care
American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Cardiology
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Dental Association
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Medical Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Thoracic Society
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Cancer Prevention and Treatment Fund
Lung Cancer Alliance
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network
National Association of City and County Health Officials
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Latino Alliance for Health Equity
National Physicians Alliance
Partnership for Prevention
Society for Public Health Education
Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society