



NEWS RELEASE

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Neighborhood Retailers Reject Pierce County Tobacco Ad Ban.

"Ineffective, Illegal. Political Grandstanding at Taxpayer Cost," says Spokesman.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE....Wednesday, October 2, 1996

TACOMA--Sporting "ENOUGH ALREADY!" buttons, the state's neighborhood retailers turned out in force before the Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health today to voice their opposition to the Board's proposed resolution severely restricting outdoor tobacco advertising.

Stu Cloud, a board member and spokesman for the Washington State Association of Neighborhood Stores, characterized the proposed restrictions as "nothing more than political grandstanding at taxpayer expense." "It's a media stunt," Cloud said, "contrived by anti-tobacco activists and the Board's outside public relations agency which is being paid over \$ 275,000 in taxpayer funds to come up with this stuff and promote it."

Cloud said the proposed regulation won't curb underage use of tobacco and that it is illegal on a number of counts--from state and federal preemption, to commercial free speech and the equal protection clause. "Valuable time and money are being wasted at a time when other public health and safety needs in Pierce County go begging," he said, "and the costs of potential litigation could run into the millions, with no cozy contingency fee arrangements to carry the burden."

Cloud stressed that the neighborhood retailers are committed to curbing youth access to tobacco, calling on the Board and anti-tobacco activists to support efforts such as the WE CARD program, "Cops-in-Shops," and a legislative move to make possession and use of tobacco by minors--not just purchase--illegal.

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