

The background of the slide features a large, semi-transparent watermark of the Rutgers University seal. The seal is circular and contains the text 'RUTGERS UNIVERSITY' around the perimeter and '1773' at the bottom. The seal is centered and overlaps the main text.

# RUTGERS

Center for Tobacco Studies

## **The time is NOW for a ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco and nicotine products**

**Andrea Villanti, PhD, MPH**

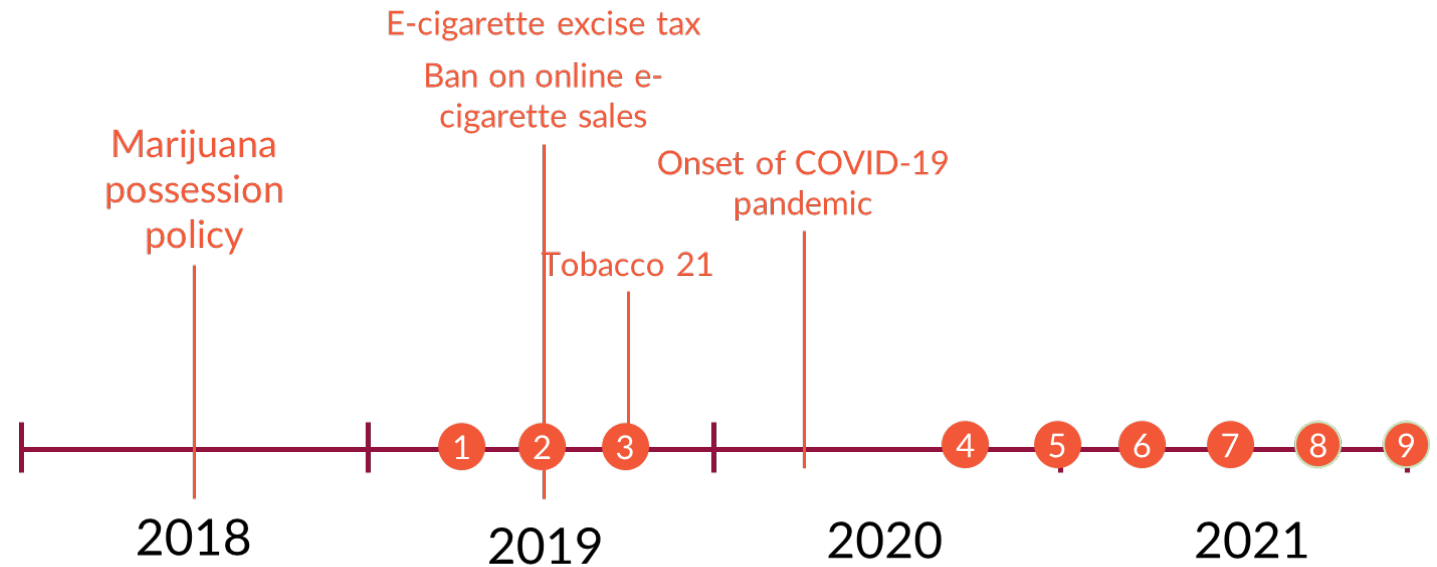
**Deputy Director, Rutgers Center for Tobacco Studies**

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Policy, Rutgers School of Public Health**

- Funding from NIH, FDA, and HRSA.
- No other financial relationships to disclose.
- No industry funding; no off-label medications use discussed.
- The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, or the Health Resources and Services Administration.

- Scientific expert on menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products
  - Deputy Director, Rutgers Center for Tobacco Studies and tenured Associate Professor in the Rutgers School of Public Health
  - Adjunct Associate Professor in Psychological Sciences and Psychiatry at UVM; Co-director, Surveillance & Evaluation Core of UVM Center on Rural Addiction
- Vermonter and committed to public health in Vermont
- Parent whose children will be affected by this policy

- Flavored tobacco use is prevalent in Vermont young people.
- Existing policy evaluations have demonstrated public health benefit of menthol cigarette and flavored tobacco bans.
  - Decreased youth tobacco use
  - Increased tobacco cessation among adults who use menthol cigarettes
  - No impact on illicit market
- Tobacco companies are taking aggressive actions and employing disinformation to maintain their profits from flavored tobacco, particularly menthol cigarettes.



- Lead the Policy and Communication Evaluation (PACE) Vermont study, in partnership with the Vermont Department of Health.
- Track issues related to tobacco and substance use in Vermont adolescents and young adults.

# High flavored tobacco prevalence in VT young people

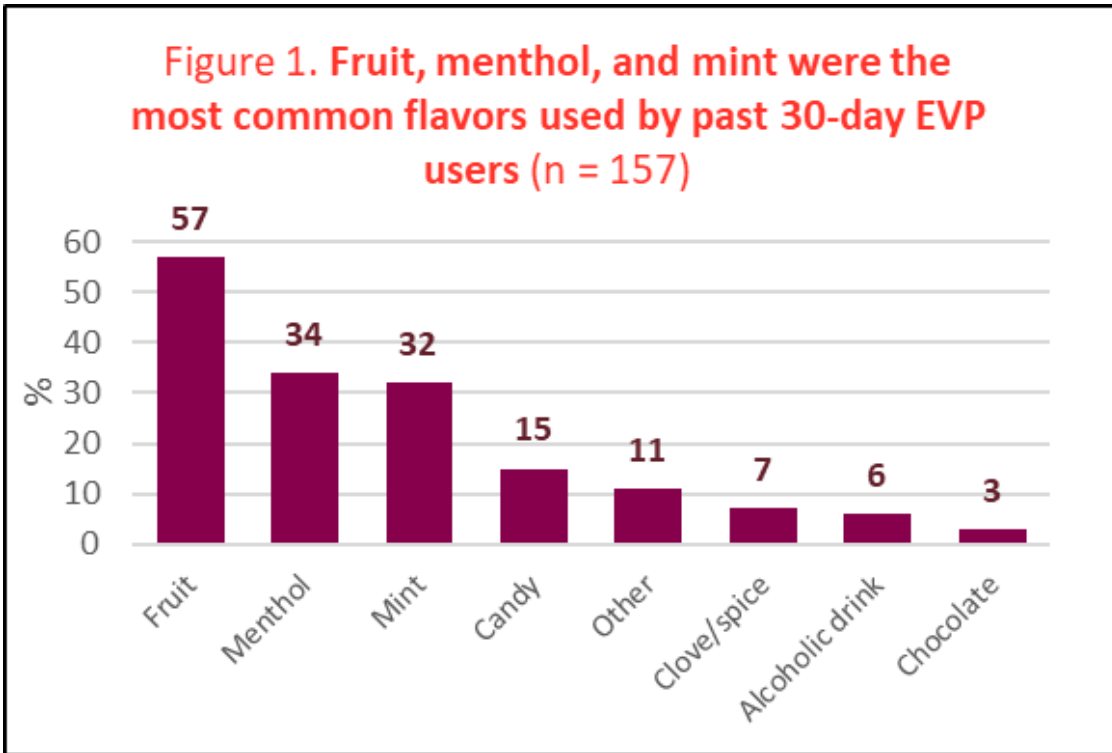
- Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) of PACE Vermont participants used an electronic vapor product (EVP) in the past 30 days.
  - Of those, 83% used flavored EVPs.
- Nearly 40% of PACE Vermont participants who used cigarettes in the past 30 days used menthol or flavored cigarettes.
- More than 40% of young people who used cigar, cigarillo, or little cigars in the past 30 days used flavored cigars.

**Table 1. Prevalence of past 30-day nicotine and tobacco product use and proportion of flavored product use within each product, 2020.**

|   | Age 12-20<br>(n = 471) | Age 21-25<br>(n = 402) | Total<br>(n = 873)      |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Any electronic vapor product (EVP)</b>             | 19%<br>(88/471)        | 17%<br>(69/402)        | 18%<br>(157/873)        |
| <b>Proportion any flavored EVP</b>                    | <b>85%</b><br>(75/88)  | <b>80%</b><br>(55/69)  | <b>83%</b><br>(130/157) |
| <b>Any cigarette</b>                                  | 8%<br>(36/471)         | 13%<br>(54/402)        | 10%<br>(90/873)         |
| <b>Proportion any menthol/<br/>flavored cigarette</b> | <b>31%</b><br>(11/36)  | <b>41%</b><br>(22/54)  | <b>37%</b><br>(33/90)   |
| <b>Any cigars</b>                                     | 4%<br>(18/471)         | 7%<br>(30/402)         | 6%<br>(48/873)          |
| <b>Proportion any flavored cigars</b>                 | <b>33%</b><br>(6/18)   | <b>50%</b><br>(15/30)  | <b>44%</b><br>(21/48)   |

# Flavored products are “easier to use”

Figure 1. Fruit, menthol, and mint were the most common flavors used by past 30-day EVP users (n = 157)



- Fruit, menthol, and mint were the most common flavors used among Vermont adolescents and young adults who used electronic vapor products (EVPs).
- In participants aged 12-20 in Wave 5 (n = 433), 55% believed that **flavored tobacco products were “easier to use”** than non-flavored tobacco products (44% “about the same” and 2% “harder to use”).

# Key points re: menthol and flavored tobacco products

- Menthol cigarettes and flavored tobacco products facilitate youth initiation and progression to regular tobacco use.
- Menthol cigarettes impede adult smoking cessation.
- Banning menthol and flavors in tobacco/e-cigarette products would reduce the number of tobacco users and thereby benefit public health.

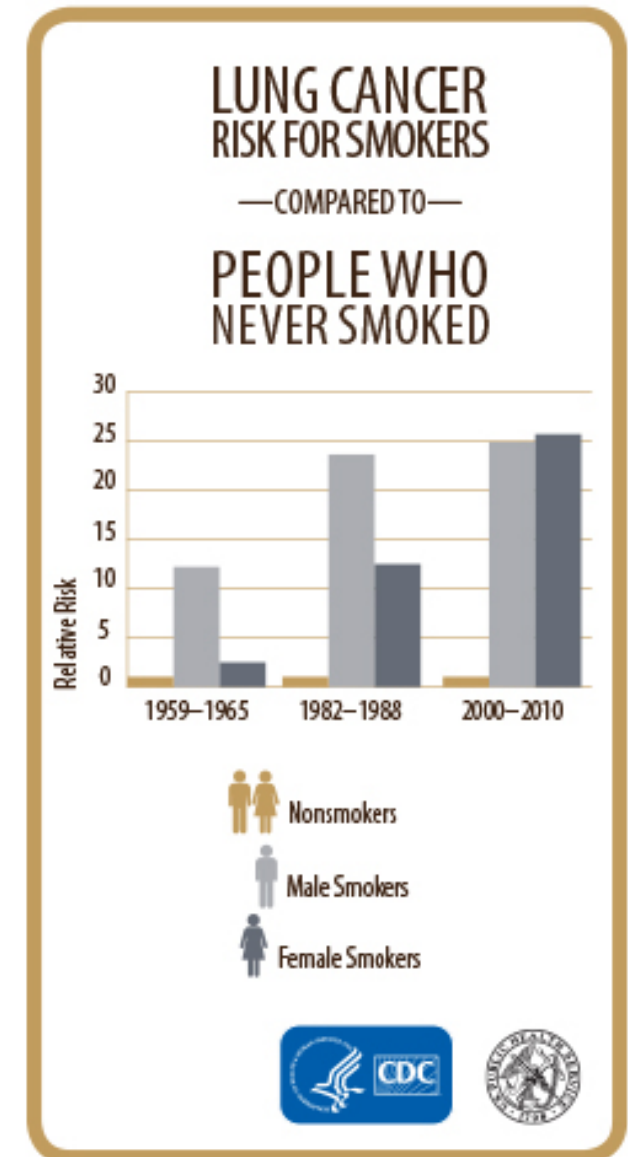


- Prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol
- Prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol, within XX feet of schools
  - Within XX feet of “youth-sensitive places”
- Prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol, except in adult-only stores and liquor stores

**\*\*Most flavored tobacco bans exempt menthol cigarettes**

- Reduced tobacco use in youth and young adults
  - Current tobacco use (any product)
  - Vaping/use of electronic vapor products
  - Cigarette use
- Consistent, robust evidence of menthol cigarette bans increasing cessation among adults who use menthol cigarettes
- No evidence of increases in illicit tobacco seizures or purchases

- **Cigarettes have become more lethal over time.**
  - More death and disease, despite lower per capita consumption and lower smoking prevalence.
- Quitting tobacco use benefits people at any age.

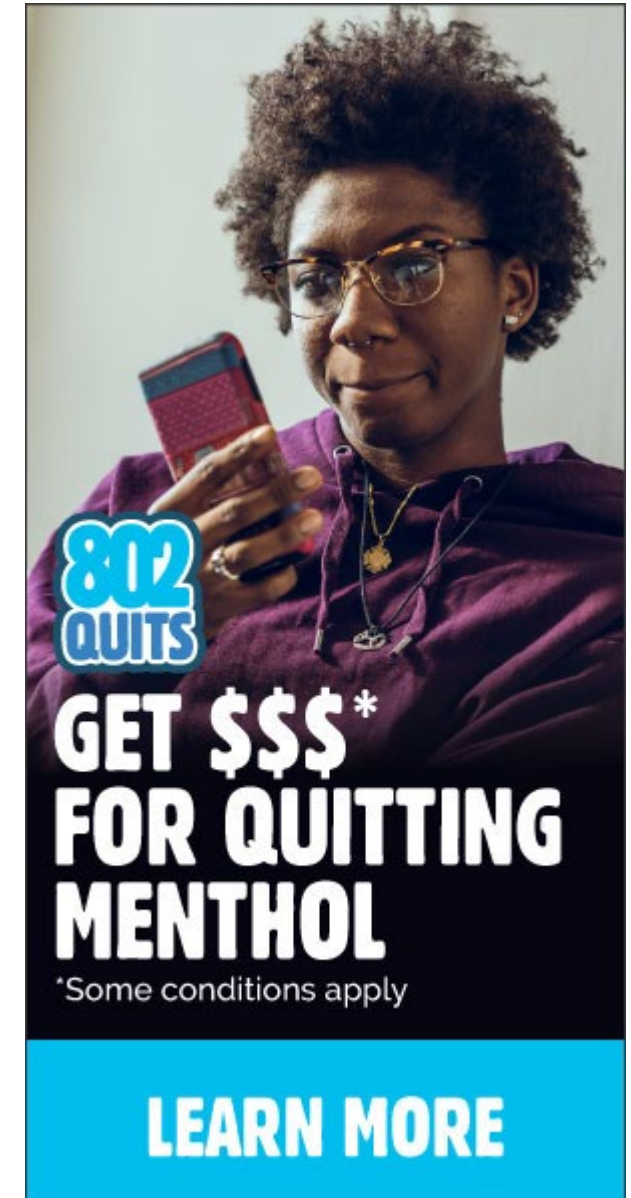


# Menthol choice is not FREEDOM

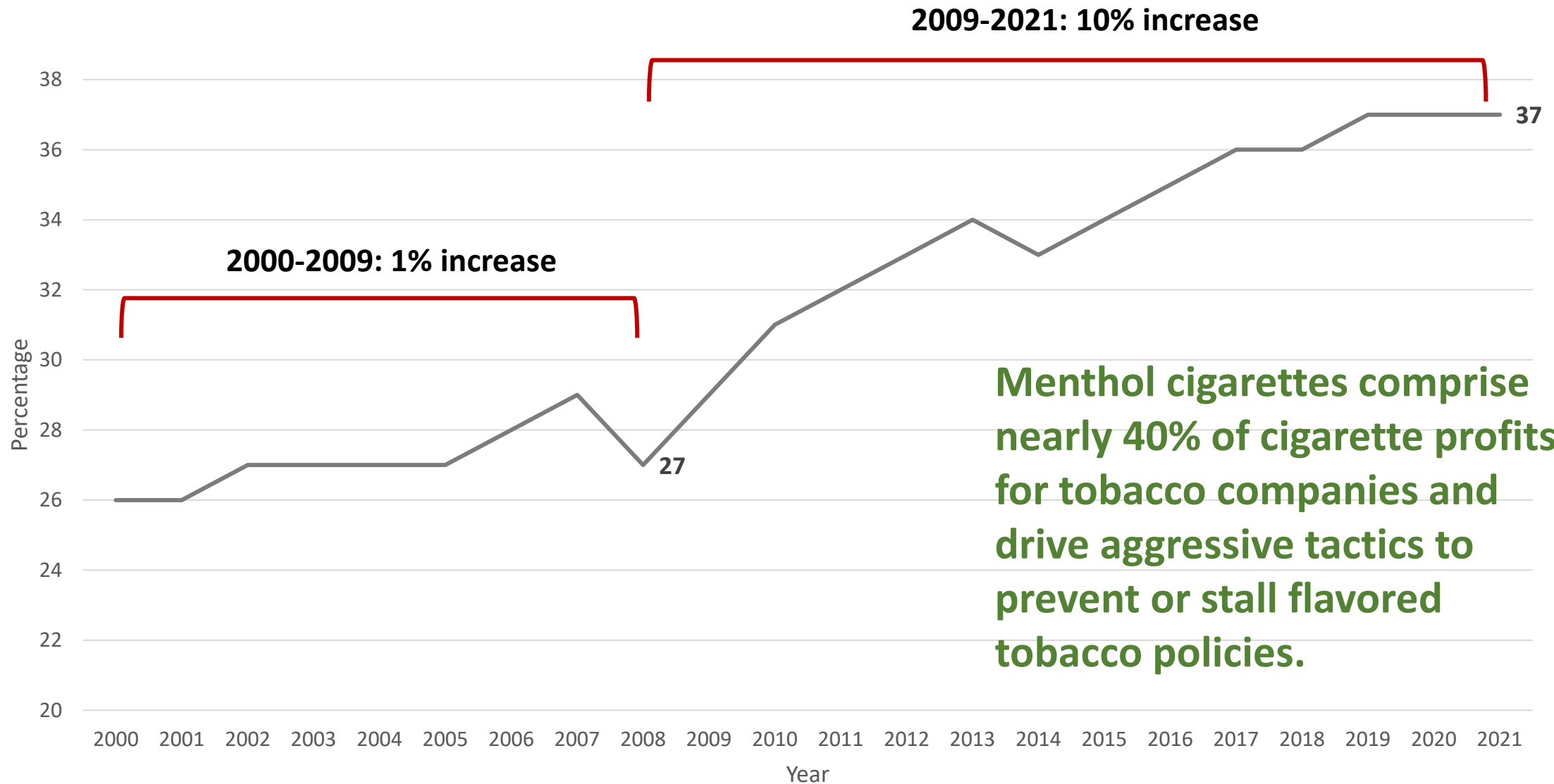
- **More than half of adults who smoke cigarettes want to quit (55.1%).**
  - Fewer than 1 in 10 succeed in quitting each year (7.5%).
- People who smoke menthol cigarette are **more likely to try to quit** and **less likely to succeed in quitting** than people who smoke non-menthol cigarettes.
  - This is particularly true for non-white people who smoke menthol cigarettes.



- **Vermont is leading the way in helping adults to quit menthol tobacco products**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> state to use a quitline incentive to improve access to and adherence with evidence-based treatment for menthol tobacco users
- **Now is the time to enact a ban!**
  - We have a program IN-PLACE to help Vermonters quit



# Menthol cigarette market share





## Los Angeles Times

WORLD & NATION

### How Big Tobacco used George Floyd and Eric Garner to stoke fear among Black smokers



Demonstrators rally in downtown Los Angeles in August 2020 in opposition to California Senate Bill 793. They contend that the ban on the sale of flavored tobacco statewide — including menthol cigarettes — would unfairly target African Americans. The bill briefly became law, but a successful petition drive will require voters to approve it in November. (Ringo Chiu / Alamy)

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## MICHIGAN

### Detroit pastor says he was offered \$250,000 to oppose menthol cigarette ban

**Ben Stockton** The Bureau of Investigative Journalism

Published 6:04 a.m. ET Aug. 25, 2022 | Updated 9:13 p.m. ET Aug. 25, 2022

View Comments



A pastor was offered hundreds of thousands of dollars to lead a campaign against banning the sale of menthol cigarettes in the U.S., the [Bureau of Investigative Journalism](#) has learned.

The Rev. Horace Sheffield, a prominent Black civil rights campaigner in Detroit, was told the money was coming from RJ Reynolds, the tobacco giant behind America's most popular brand of menthol cigarettes, Newport.

<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-04-25/inside-big-tobaccos-strategy-to-stoke-fear-among-black-smokers-facing-menthol-bans>

<https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2022/08/25/detroit-pastor-says-he-offered-250-k-oppose-menthol-cigarette-ban/7866711001/>

# Tobacco companies subvert policy with synthetic coolants

- “New” Camel and Newport varieties with “bold, lasting flavor” marketed to California consumers in January 2023.
- The company’s records of ingredients show that the Camel Crisp and the Newport EXP versions contain a synthetic cooling agent referred to as WS-3.
  - Germany and Belgium have prohibited this particular additive.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/11/health/cigarettes-flavor-ban-california.html>

The New York Times

## *R.J. Reynolds Pivots to New Cigarette Pitches as Flavor Ban Takes Effect*

Now that California’s tobacco prohibitions are in place, some Camel and Newport items are billed as newly “fresh” or “crisp” non-menthol versions.

Give this article



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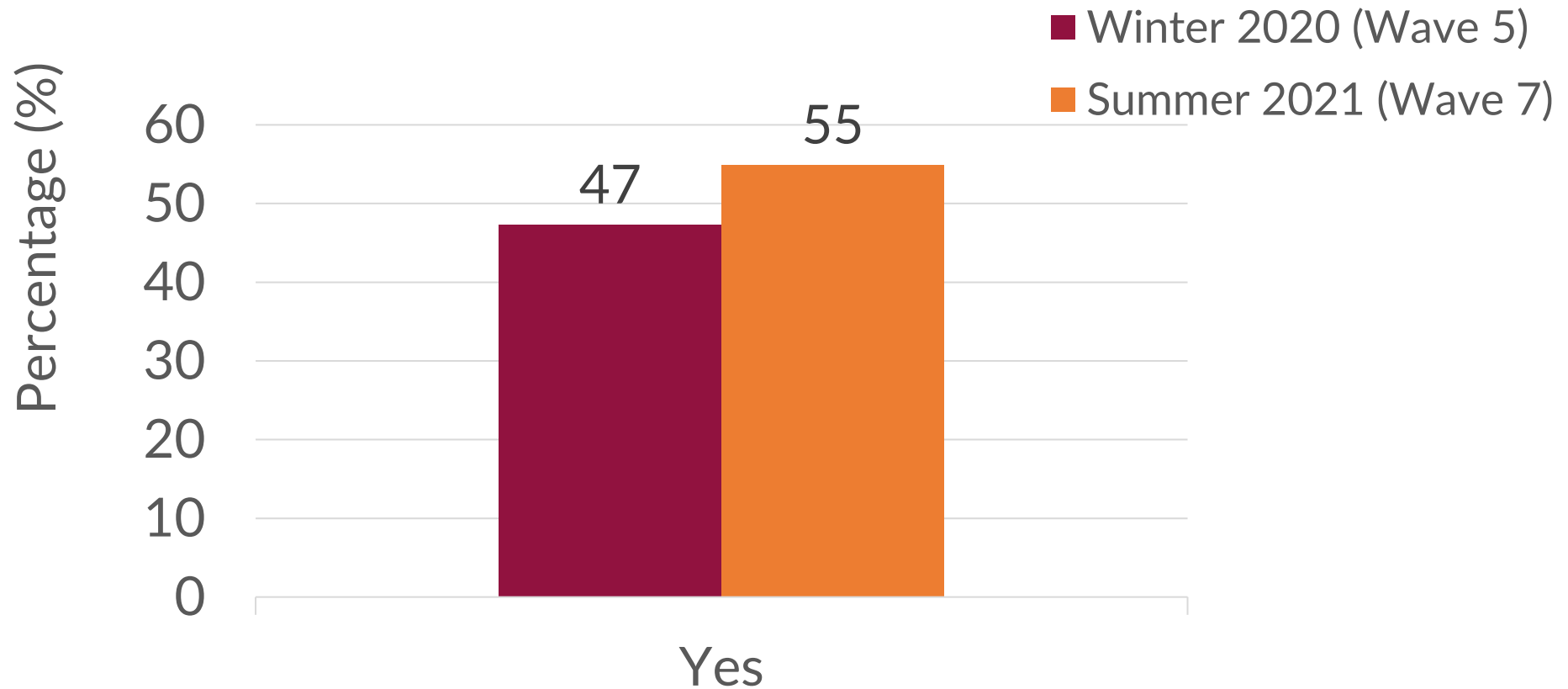


In California, R.J. Reynolds has begun marketing what it says is a new, non-menthol Newport cigarette. Antismoking advocates criticized the campaign as an attempt to circumvent the state’s ban on flavored tobacco products. Aaron Wojack for The New York Times



- Flavored tobacco ban should NOT apply to FDA-approved cessation medications (i.e., nicotine replacement therapy)
  - Ensure access to these products to support cessation
- Consider specifying synthetic coolants (including WS-3) in Vermont's flavored tobacco ban
- Ongoing research on flavors in tobacco products at UVM.
  - Consider including language in the bill to allow for continuation of scientific research to inform and evaluate future policy efforts.

## Do you think it should be illegal for all tobacco products to be sold in flavors such as menthol, clove, chocolate, candy and fruit?



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