

# SENATE, No. 1947

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 22, 2018

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE**

**District 19 (Middlesex)**

**Senator ROBERT W. SINGER**

**District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)**

**Senator SANDRA B. CUNNINGHAM**

**District 31 (Hudson)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senator Turner**

**SYNOPSIS**

Prohibits sale of menthol cigarettes.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/15/2019)**

1 AN ACT concerning tobacco products, amending P.L.2008, c.91,  
2 and supplementing Title 2A of the New Jersey Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

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7 1. (New section) The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of death  
9 in the United States. The health risks associated with smoking  
10 include lung and other cancers, chronic obstructive pulmonary  
11 disease, arteriosclerosis, coronary disease, stroke, emphysema,  
12 chronic bronchitis, and birth defects.

13 b. Although it is a common misperception that menthol  
14 cigarettes are a “safer” alternative to non-menthol cigarettes, studies  
15 have found that menthol cigarettes have the same negative health  
16 consequences as do non-menthol cigarettes.

17 c. Because menthol has cooling, desensitizing, and proanalgesic  
18 effects, it can dull and mask the bitter and irritating effects of  
19 tobacco smoke. As a result, menthol cigarettes are particularly  
20 attractive to first-time smokers and are associated with increased  
21 rates of smoking initiation and progression to regular cigarette  
22 smoking. Consequently, younger populations have the highest rate  
23 of menthol cigarette use in the country.

24 d. Because menthol cigarettes are more comfortable to smoke,  
25 smokers inhale more often, inhale more deeply, and hold the smoke  
26 in longer, increasing lung exposure to the chemicals found in  
27 tobacco smoke.

28 e. Studies have found that menthol cigarette smokers are more  
29 likely to smoke their first cigarette within five minutes of waking,  
30 are more likely to wake in the middle of the night for a cigarette,  
31 and have increased cravings for cigarettes than do smokers of non-  
32 menthol cigarettes. Menthol smokers have been found to be more  
33 nicotine dependent and less successful with smoking cessation  
34 efforts when compared with other smokers.

35 f. Historically, the marketing and promotion of menthol  
36 cigarettes has heavily targeted the African American community,  
37 and menthol products are given increased shelf space in retail  
38 outlets within African American and other minority neighborhoods.  
39 Consequently, nearly 90 percent of African American smokers  
40 prefer menthol cigarettes, and other ethnic minorities similarly use  
41 menthol cigarettes at disproportionately higher rates. Menthol  
42 cigarette use is also more common among women and in  
43 communities with lower socioeconomic status.

44 g. A 2011 final report issued by the Tobacco Products Scientific  
45 Advisory Committee of the federal Food and Drug Administration

**EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

**Matter underlined thus is new matter.**

1 (FDA) concluded that “removal of menthol cigarettes from the  
2 marketplace would benefit public health in the United States.” An  
3 independent scientific review by the FDA concluded “that menthol  
4 cigarettes pose a public health risk above that seen with non-  
5 menthol cigarettes.”

6 h. In 2013, the FDA issued an Advanced Notice of Proposed  
7 Rule Making to take public input on the regulatory options  
8 regarding menthol cigarettes. However, the FDA has taken no  
9 subsequent action since that time to remove menthol cigarettes from  
10 the marketplace. On August 22, 2017, a group of eight U.S.  
11 Senators submitted a letter to the FDA requesting further action to  
12 address the risk of menthol cigarettes.

13 i. In 2008, New Jersey acted to ban the sale of flavored  
14 cigarettes, primarily out of a concern that flavored cigarettes play a  
15 primary role in young people taking up smoking. The 2008 ban  
16 provided an exception for menthol and clove flavorings. In 2009,  
17 Congress similarly acted to ban flavored cigarettes, which ban  
18 included clove-flavored cigarettes but provided an exception for  
19 menthol cigarettes.

20 j. Because menthol cigarettes present an increased health risk,  
21 increased addiction potential, increased difficulty quitting,  
22 increased prevalence of smoking initiation and progression to  
23 regular tobacco use, and disproportionately increased use  
24 prevalence among young people and individuals in minority  
25 communities, it is therefore fitting and appropriate, and in the best  
26 interests of the public health and the health of the citizens of this  
27 State, that New Jersey ban all sales of menthol cigarettes.

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29 2. Section 2 of P.L.2008, c.91 (C.2A:170-51.6) is amended to  
30 read as follows:

31 2. a. No person, either directly or indirectly by an agent or  
32 employee, or by a vending machine owned by the person or located  
33 in the person's establishment, shall sell, offer for sale, distribute for  
34 commercial purpose at no cost or minimal cost or with coupons or  
35 rebate offers, give or furnish, to a person a cigarette, or any  
36 component part thereof, which contains a natural or artificial  
37 constituent or additive that causes the cigarette or any smoke  
38 emanating from that product to have a characterizing flavor other  
39 than tobacco【, clove or menthol】. In no event shall a cigarette or  
40 any component part thereof be construed to have a characterizing  
41 flavor based solely on the use of additives or flavorings, or the  
42 provision of an ingredient list made available by any means.

43 As used in this section:

44 (1) "characterizing flavor other than tobacco【, clove or  
45 menthol】" means that: the cigarette, or any smoke emanating from  
46 that product, imparts a distinguishable flavor, taste or aroma other  
47 than tobacco【, clove or menthol】 prior to or during consumption,  
48 including, but not limited to, any menthol, mint, wintergreen, clove,

1 fruit, chocolate, vanilla, honey, candy, cocoa, dessert, alcoholic  
2 beverage, herb or spice flavoring; or the cigarette or any component  
3 part thereof is advertised or marketed as having or producing any  
4 such flavor, taste or aroma;

5 (2) "cigarette" means (a) any roll of tobacco wrapped in paper or  
6 in any substance not containing tobacco, and (b) any roll of tobacco  
7 wrapped in any substance containing tobacco which, because of its  
8 appearance, the type of tobacco used in the filler, or its packaging  
9 and labeling, is likely to be offered to, or purchased by, consumers  
10 as a cigarette as described in subparagraph (a) of this paragraph (2);  
11 and

12 (3) "component part thereof" includes, but is not limited to, the  
13 tobacco, paper, roll or filter, or any other matter or substance which  
14 can be smoked.

15 b. A person who violates the provisions of subsection a. of this  
16 section shall be liable to a civil penalty of not less than \$250 for the  
17 first violation, not less than \$500 for the second violation, and  
18 \$1,000 for the third and each subsequent violation. The civil  
19 penalty shall be collected pursuant to the "Penalty Enforcement  
20 Law of 1999," P.L.1999, c.274 (C.2A:58-10 et seq.), in a summary  
21 proceeding before the municipal court having jurisdiction. An  
22 official authorized by statute or ordinance to enforce the State or  
23 local health codes or a law enforcement officer having enforcement  
24 authority in that municipality may issue a summons for a violation  
25 of the provisions of subsection a. of this section, and may serve and  
26 execute all process with respect to the enforcement of this section  
27 consistent with the Rules of Court. A penalty recovered under the  
28 provisions of this subsection shall be recovered by and in the name  
29 of the State by the local health agency. The penalty shall be paid  
30 into the treasury of the municipality in which the violation occurred  
31 for the general uses of the municipality.

32 c. In addition to the provisions of subsection b. of this section,  
33 upon the recommendation of the municipality, following a hearing  
34 by the municipality, the Division of Taxation in the Department of  
35 the Treasury may suspend or, after a second or subsequent violation  
36 of the provisions of subsection a. of this section, revoke the license  
37 of a retail dealer issued under section 202 of P.L.1948, c.65  
38 (C.54:40A-4). The licensee shall be subject to administrative  
39 charges, based on a schedule issued by the Director of the Division  
40 of Taxation, which may provide for a monetary penalty in lieu of a  
41 suspension.

42 (cf: P.L.2008, c.91, s.2)

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44 3. This act shall take effect on the 60th day after enactment.

STATEMENT

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This bill includes menthol and clove cigarettes in the current prohibition against the sale and distribution of flavored cigarettes.

Current State law provides that no person may sell, offer for sale, distribute for commercial purpose at no cost or minimal cost or with coupons or rebate offers, give, or furnish to a person a cigarette that imparts a “characterizing flavor other than tobacco, clove or menthol.” The ban applies to the cigarette, any smoke emanating from the cigarette, and any component part of the cigarette, including the tobacco, paper, roll or filter, or any other matter or substance that can be smoked. A series of monetary penalties and adverse licensure actions may be imposed for violations of the ban.

The current State law was enacted in 2008; in 2009, a federal ban on the sale of flavored cigarettes was enacted and codified at 21 U.S.C.S. s.387g. The federal law includes clove flavorings in the ban, but provides an exception for tobacco and menthol flavors.

This bill updates the current State law to reflect the federal ban on clove-flavored cigarettes, and additionally prohibits sales of menthol-flavored cigarettes, which are associated with increased health risks, increased addiction potential, increased difficulty quitting, and increased rates of young people starting smoking and progressing to regular tobacco use. Additionally, marketing of menthol cigarettes has historically targeted African American and other minority communities, resulting in disproportionately higher rates of menthol cigarette use within those communities. It is the sponsor’s belief that banning all sales of menthol cigarettes in the State will promote the public health and mitigate the enhanced risks associated with menthol cigarette use.