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January 28, 2019

**Health & Insurance House Committee
Colorado General Assembly**

SENT VIA E-Mail: anne.wallace@state.co.us

RE: Letter of Support for House Bill 19-1033

Dear Madame Chair Lontine and Committee members:

The Avon Town Council urges the House Health & Insurance Committee to approve House Bill 19-1033. The current epidemic of vaping among Colorado youth has drawn our Town Council's attention to the harmful and addictive effects of tobacco use. Last summer, the Avon Town Council received detailed accounts from local students on the rapid growth and prevalence of nicotine vaping use in the Eagle County high schools. Due to the compact size and ease of use, vaping has become commonplace by minor students on high school properties through the school day. The alarming rise in vaping among youth is undoing the progress that has been made over the last decade in reducing youth tobacco use. Recent studies have shown vaping is not a harmless alternative to smoking and we now know that vaping greatly increases the likelihood of youth smoking cigarettes. We also know that nicotine primes the young brain for other drug use. The rapid growth in vaping has been recognized as a national epidemic that warrants immediate attention during this legislative session.

In response to the epidemic, the Avon Town Council unanimously passed Ordinance No. 18-08 last August to prohibit the sale of any tobacco or nicotine product to anyone under the age of 21 and to establish a licensing and enforcement program for all tobacco and nicotine product retailers. The residents of Avon have also shown concern about the harmful effects of tobacco and nicotine by overwhelmingly passing a tobacco tax at the November 6, 2018 election. Ballot Issue 2B passed with an affirmative vote of 74.46% enacting a \$3 per pack of cigarettes excise tax and a 40% sales tax on other tobacco and nicotine products.

Despite Avon's leadership to reduce youth access to all types of tobacco products in Avon, our regulations will not be effective so long as area youth may easily purchase tobacco and nicotine products immediately outside of Avon's incorporated limits in our neighboring unincorporated communities of Eagle-Vail and Edwards. House Bill 19-1033 has provided us with hope that Eagle County and all other counties within the state of Colorado may soon have the authority to impose regulations on the sale of tobacco products, including prohibiting sales to a person under 21 years of age.

The Avon Town Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy community our our youth. We applaud the sponsors of HB 19-1033 and strongly urge you to approve HB 19-1033. Please feel welcome to contact Scott Prince, Avon Town Council member, sprince@avon.org, (970)471-9235, or Preston Neill, Acting Town Manager, pneill@avon.org, (970)748-4404 (who implemented our new tobacco regulations this fall) with any questions you may have about our tobacco retail licensing program.

Sincerely,



Mayor Sarah Smith Hymes
Town of Avon

Cc: Representative Kerry Tipper
Representative Chris Kennedy
Senator Rhonda Fields
Senator Kevin Priola
Representative Dylan Roberts
Senator Kerry Donovan
Eagle County Commissioner Jeanne McQueeney
Eagle County Commissioner Jill Ryan
Eagle County Commissioner Kathy Chandler-Henry