

Rocky Mountain Smoke Free Alliance to Boycott Denver City Council Meeting

Denver Small Vape Shop Owners Decry Rushed Process that Limited Public Input



Denver, Colorado Dec 16, 2024 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXp9W1P8cUY>

The Rocky Mountain Smoke Free Alliance (RMSFA) announced that they will be boycotting the December 16, 2024, Denver City Council meeting where the full Council is expected to vote for final passage on an ordinance to ban flavored nicotine and tobacco products in the City of Denver.

The RMSFA is a statewide association of small vape store owners, including 25 shops in the City of Denver, that has been advocating for new aggressive enforcement and regulatory reforms in Denver rather than a total flavor ban. Once passed the new ordinance will force the closure of fifty, minority-owned, small vape stores in Denver. The ill conceived ban will destroy the economic futures of the store owners and lay off hundreds of employees. The ban will also reduce \$13 million dollars in annual tax revenue and other economic benefits to the City of Denver.

RMSFA President and vape shop (Myxed Up) owner Phil Guerin was dismayed by the lack of consideration the small businesses received in this process. "We will not be attending tonight's council meeting because most of these elected officials don't care what we have to say. We offered a long list of ideas that included special permitting, aggressive new penalties for retailers that are caught selling to underaged customers, mandatory ID scanners and many other ideas that have would have legitimately helped reduce youth access considerably, but this city council had made up it's mind a long time ago," said Guerin. "The total lack of empathy for what this ordinance will do to our small retailers, our families and our employees has been a centerpiece of this whole flawed process and Denver voters should be very disappointed."

The RMSFA did get a chance to meet with some of the Denver City Council members but others refused to even meet. In many cases, Denver City Council rules limit public testimony on it's ordinance changes to 30 minutes and does not allow for extended hearings like the Colorado General Assembly.

RMSFA member Wali Sawaged, spoke about the experience of small businesses dealing with the rushed process that limited their input. "With such a limited process, business owners who have never had a violation will now close and we did not even get a chance to be heard, said Sawaged. "We have testified before the state legislature where those bodies really take the time to listen and often allow hours of testimony. Denver needs to reform this process to allow for more public input when they pass deeply flawed laws that attack small businesses."

RMSFA members in Denver will ask Mayor Mike Johnston to veto this ordinance and are weighing options to challenge the ordinance and continue their struggle to prevent other localities in Colorado from copying this extremely flawed ordinance at the local and state levels.



Media Contact

Rocky Mountain Smoke Free Alliance

rmsfa2025@gmail.com

844-417-6732

5612 E Colfax Ave

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