



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**CITY SUES JUUL LABS, LOCAL RETAIL STORES FOR UNFAIR AND DECEPTIVE PRACTICES IN MARKETING
AND SELLING E-CIGARETTE PRODUCTS TO CHICAGO MINORS**

Jury Trial Demanded, City Seeks Fines and Injunctive Relief in Ongoing Battle

CHICAGO – The City of Chicago today announced it has filed a lawsuit against JUUL Labs Inc. and five local retail stores for violations of the Municipal Code of Chicago by illegally marketing and selling JUUL products to Chicago residents under 21 years of age.

“Chicago has been a leader in the fight against the e-cigarette industry's practices intended to hook minors on these harmful products and we are proud to announce another big step in this battle to protect our young people's health,” said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot.

“In recent years, Chicago has filed four lawsuits against 40 e-cigarette businesses and sent notices of violation to many more,” said Corporation Counsel Mark A. Flessner. “The Law Department's Affirmative Litigation group is working hard to combat what we have all seen before in this city and this country with disastrous health consequences – addiction to nicotine products beginning in youth.”

The actions taken to date have resulted in settlements under which e-cigarette businesses agreed to important injunctive remedies—including prohibitions on sales in Chicago, enhanced age verification, and restrictions on youth-friendly flavored products—and to pay about \$1 million in fines to the City.

The new complaint, filed Thursday in the Circuit Court of Cook County, alleges that JUUL has unabashedly marketed to youth. Taking a page out of Big Tobacco's playbook, JUUL branded its products as accessories for a cool, aspirational lifestyle. JUUL also failed to implement adequate age verification procedures, resulting in significant sales to young Chicagoans.

The five retailers cited in the complaint are Leah Mol Inc., doing business as Rog Mobil; 4901 Central Inc., doing business as Mobil; 2550 Pulaski Business Inc., doing business as Mobil; T and M Gas Inc., doing business as Shell; and Irving Shell Gas and Food Inc. The complaint alleges these businesses failed to implement effective safeguards to prevent the sale of JUUL products to minors. City inspectors

witnessed each of the five retailer defendants selling JUUL pods to minors despite, in some instances, knowing the minors' true age, according to the lawsuit.

Rosa Escareno, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, said these ongoing practices are particularly egregious given the public efforts the City has already undertaken to stop them.

"Putting profits above health, particularly when it comes to Chicago's young people, cannot be tolerated," Escareno said. "We will continue to use the tools we have, financial penalties and litigation, to put an end these practices."

In 2019, BACP issued 413 citations for tobacco sales to minors, with fines totaling \$645,000.

Dr. Allison Arwady, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health, applauded efforts to stop these illegal practices and prevent nicotine addiction.

"In Chicago and across the entire country we have made tremendous strides to lower youth cigarette smoking, in part because of the settlement agreement with Big Tobacco in 1998 that prohibited advertising of conventional cigarettes to young people," Dr. Arwady said. "Those gains are now threatened with the rise and popularity of vaping. We cannot let this happen in our city again."

The lawsuit alleges that when JUUL's popularity exploded in 2017, JUUL knew underage use was a contributing factor but did not take meaningful steps to curb the problem. JUUL, based in San Francisco, CA, claims to restrict sales to people of legal age, however, it has failed to implement strict age verification requirements or adequately oversee retailers, resulting in significant sales to minors, the lawsuit stated.

Although more than two-thirds of teens nationally believe that e-cigarette use can be part of a healthy life, the U.S. Surgeon General has declared youth use of e-cigarettes to be "unsafe." The Surgeon General explained that youth e-cigarette use may cause an addiction to nicotine, may have lasting deleterious consequences for brain development, can expose users to several chemicals known to have adverse health effects and is associated with higher use of traditional cigarettes later in life.

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