

States seek stop to 'little cigar' ads

May 19 2006

State governments want a U.S. federal ban on the marketing of cigarette-like products as "little cigars," saying tobacco firms use it to evade taxes.

Attorneys general from 40 states have asked the U.S. Treasury Department to take action, claiming these products are identical to cigarettes as "little cigars" and also are designed to target the young, reports The Washington Post.

Existing rules allow such products with brown instead of white wrappers to be labeled as little cigars, the report said.

The states' law enforcement leaders said the "little cigars," designed to entice young smokers, cost less than cigarettes and use flavors such as chocolate and raspberry, the Post reported. The labeling also benefits the companies to pay less federal and state taxes and evade restrictions under the 1998 master agreement between tobacco companies and all 50 states.

On the other side, tobacco firms and the cigar group trade association have sought clarification on the definition of the two products, the report said.

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Citation: States seek stop to 'little cigar' ads (2006, May 19) retrieved 15 August

2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2006-05-states-aposlittle-cigarapos-ads.html>

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