



State Board of Equalization

# News Release

**Michelle Steel, Member**

**3<sup>rd</sup> District – Rolling Hills Estates**

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Executive Director  
[www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov)

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Board of Equalization Notifies Companies of Flavored Cigarette Ban**

Michelle Steel, Third District Member of the State Board of Equalization (BOE), today announced that the BOE has notified wholesalers and distributors that it is illegal to sell flavored cigarettes or roll-your-own (RYO) under the federal U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provision of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act. The BOE sent a special notice by email informing them of this new federal regulation.

Under federal law, these products can no longer be manufactured, imported, or sold in the United States and could be seized by federal, state or local law enforcement authorities. Cigarettes and RYO products banned by the FDA have been and continue to be removed from the California Tobacco Directory by the California Attorney General and the California Department of Justice.

This federal ban prohibits a cigarette or any of its component parts (including the tobacco, filter, or paper) from containing, as a constituent (including a smoke constituent) or additive, an artificial or natural flavor (other than tobacco or menthol) or an herb or spice, including strawberry, grape, orange, clove, cinnamon, pineapple, vanilla, coconut, licorice, cocoa, chocolate, cherry, or coffee, that is a characterizing flavor of the tobacco product or tobacco smoke.

For general information regarding the FDA's Tobacco Program and the ban on flavored cigarettes and RYO products, please refer to the FDA's website at [www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/default.htm](http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/default.htm).

To access the product listing on the California Tobacco Directory, please refer to the AG's website at: <http://ag.ca.gov/tobacco/directory.php>.

It is illegal for distributors to affix a California tax stamp on packages of cigarettes or pay the tax on roll-your-own product unless the manufacturer and the brand family are listed in the California Tobacco Directory.

Link to Special Notice: [Information Regarding Federal Ban on Flavored Cigarettes](#)

Elected to the Board of Equalization in 2006, Michelle Steel serves as Southern California's elected taxpayer advocate. In 2008, Steel uncovered a \$42 million mistake in the agency's sales tax refund procedures. Following her investigation, the tax agency refunded tax security deposits to over 5,500 small businesses.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization (BOE) is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects more than \$53 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes. For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit [www.taxes.ca.gov](http://www.taxes.ca.gov).

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