

Westside Impact Project Coalition
5/6/2026

Los Angeles City Council
c/o Council File 24-1220
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Strong Support for Council File 24-1220 — Restrict Nitrous Oxide Sales by Tobacco and Cannabis Retailers

Dear Council President, and Councilmembers:

On behalf of Westside Impact Project, we write to express our strong support for Council File 24-1220 and to urge the City of Los Angeles to move forward without delay on an ordinance prohibiting tobacco and cannabis retailers from selling, offering for sale, distributing, or exposing for sale nitrous oxide products, while preserving explicit exemptions for legitimate medical, food service, automotive, industrial, and pre-packaged food uses. This is the balanced framework requested by Councilmember Imelda Padilla and advanced by the Public Safety Committee.

Nitrous oxide is not a minor nuisance or harmless party product. It is an emerging public health and public safety issue. Recreational inhalation can cause oxygen deprivation, loss of consciousness, neurologic injury, cardiovascular complications, psychiatric symptoms, and death. In 2025, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warned consumers not to inhale nitrous oxide products of any flavor or size and noted that these products are being sold at smoke and vape shops, gas stations, and online. The CDC has likewise warned that repeated misuse can cause severe neurologic, cardiovascular, and psychiatric effects.

Recent Los Angeles actions and reports make clear that this is not a theoretical concern. On March 25, 2026, the Los Angeles Public Safety Committee unanimously approved an ordinance directing the City Attorney to prepare a ban on nitrous oxide sales by tobacco and cannabis retailers, with specified exemptions. On April 24, 2026, the City also moved to support SB 758 in its State Legislative Program, stating that recreational nitrous oxide misuse has emerged as a “significant public health and safety concern, particularly among young adults and youth.”

Los Angeles youth are already being affected. In a filing in Council File 24-1220, the Los Angeles Unified School District urged City action and stated that it was concerned by an increase in incidents involving students in possession of nitrous oxide on school grounds. Separately, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that LAUSD recorded 11 such incidents during the 2023–24 school year.

The City should not mistake incomplete data for limited harm. The *Los Angeles Times* also reported that LAPD’s gang and narcotics division did not have a current tracking system or enforcement framework for nitrous oxide as of late 2024. That means

the absence of comprehensive citywide data should be understood as a surveillance gap, not a lack of impact. When youth incidents are increasing, flavored products remain accessible, and city leaders are moving legislation in response, Los Angeles already has enough evidence to act.

Councilmember Padilla's February 26, 2026 letter also makes clear that nitrous oxide is a neighborhood safety and quality-of-life issue. Her letter describes the misuse of nitrous oxide as posing documented public health risks, including oxygen deprivation and associated neurological and cardiovascular harm, and it highlights the rampant discard of spent canisters on streets and in parks as a persistent source of blight that undermines community beautification efforts.

For organizations that work with young people, this issue is especially urgent. Prevention is undermined when dangerous products are sold in retail environments that youth see as normal, accessible, and low-risk. Easy availability increases exposure, contributes to normalization, and weakens the work that schools, parents, youth programs, and community organizations are doing every day to keep young people safe.

This proposed ordinance is practical and appropriately tailored. It does not interfere with legitimate medical, culinary, automotive, or industrial uses. It focuses on the retail environments that are helping normalize recreational misuse and widen access. That is sound public policy, and it is a reasonable step to protect youth, families, and neighborhoods.

For these reasons, Westside Impact Project Coalition respectfully urges the Los Angeles City Council to support and adopt Council File 24-1220 without delay.

Sincerely,

Michael Jung
Ryan Factora
Co-Chairs
Westside Impact Project
impact@publicstrategies.org