

Begin Reducing Nicotine to Less Addictive Level
2018 – Altria Group, Inc.

WHEREAS: According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), in 2015 an estimated 15.1% (36.5 million U.S. adults were current cigarette smokers. Of these 75.7% (27.6 million) smoked every day;

The CDC reports that in 2016, 3.2% of adults are current e-cigarette users and that youth are more likely than adults to use e-cigarettes. In fact, more than 2 million middle and high school students reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days;

Both cigarettes and e-cigarettes contain nicotine, a highly addictive drug;

A US government fact sheet on drugabuse.gov states: “The nicotine in any tobacco product readily absorbs into the blood when a person uses it. Upon entering the blood, nicotine immediately stimulates the adrenal glands to release the hormone epinephrine (adrenaline). Epinephrine stimulates the central nervous system and increases blood pressure, breathing, and heart rate. As with drugs such as cocaine and heroin, nicotine increases levels of the chemical messenger dopamine, which affects parts of the brain that control reward and pleasure. Studies suggest that other chemicals in tobacco smoke, such as acetaldehyde, may enhance nicotine’s effects on the brain... Although nicotine is addictive, most of the severe health effects of tobacco use come from other chemicals.”

Early evidence suggests that e-cigarette use may serve as a gateway product for preteens and teens who subsequently use other tobacco products, including cigarettes, which are known to cause disease and premature death. Under Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations designed to protect the health of young Americans, minors can no longer buy e-cigarettes in stores or online;

To date, the results are mixed in the few studies looking at whether e-cigarettes help non-pregnant adult smokers if used as a complete substitute for all cigarettes, according to the CDC;

In July 2017, FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb announced a proposal to cut the level of nicotine in cigarettes to non-addictive levels – what Bloomberg Business Week called “the most sweeping effort to reduce smoking in the US since 1965.” The FDA will be seeking public input on how best to achieve this goal;

RESOLVED: Shareholders request the Board take steps to preserve the health of its tobacco-using customers by making available to them information on the nicotine levels for each of our cigarette brands and begin reducing nicotine levels in our brands to a less addictive level.

Supporting Statement: Commissioner Gottlieb stated: “Unless we change course, 5.6 million children alive today will die prematurely later in life from tobacco use. A renewed focus on nicotine can help us to achieve a world where cigarettes no longer addict future generations of our kids; and where adults who still need or want nicotine can get it from alternative and less harmful sources.”

We expect our company to be involved in the public debate on the FDA’s proposal and urge it to play a positive role in reducing the addictiveness of cigarettes and other combusted tobacco products.