

In this issue:

- ▶ Snoop Dogg promotes line of cigarillos
- ▶ Attorneys General call on FDA to regulate e-cigarettes
- ▶ E-cigarette companies market products as “greener” alternative
- ▶ Lorillard urges Newport smokers to contact FDA

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TOBACCO MARKETING UPDATE

Reducing Youth Exposure to Tobacco Advertising and Promotion

Snoop Dogg Promotes Line of Cigarillos

By *CHRIS FARMER-LIES*

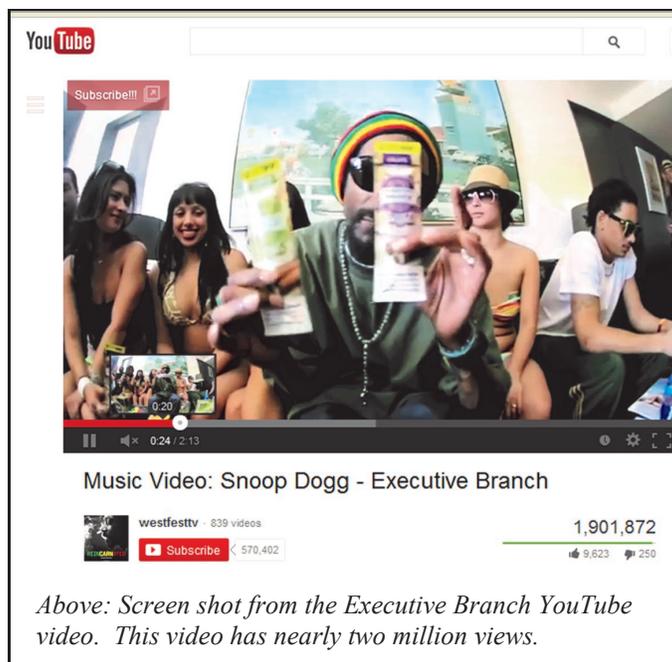
Multi-platinum rapper Snoop Dogg unveiled a new line of premium cigarillos called “Executive Branch” to coincide with the 2012 Coachella music festival. The cigarillos come in Classic Sweet, Grape, and White Grape varieties and have a suggested retail price of two for 99 cents, which is among the lowest non-discounted retail price for cigarillos. Despite the low price, marketing portrays the product as more upscale, the “gentleman’s choice,” and the general theme of the marketing campaign is that of a political campaign. Snoop and fellow rapper, Xzibit, are on the “Cabinet,” which is the promotional arm of the company. In the past, a now-defunct corporate store sold “Make Your Smoke Count” buttons in a red, white, and blue motif.

Executive Branch cigarillos are manufactured by Durfort Holdings SA, which specializes in “alternative cigar manufacturing” and manufactures a range of cigar products, including the Blunt

Wraps brand. They are distributed by Good Times Tobacco, which is probably best-known for distributing the Good Times line of cigars and Remingtons, which are among the least costly little cigars on the market.

Cigarillos and blunts are often marketed as drug paraphernalia; the Executive Branch website marketing materials are no exception. A promotional music video with Executive Branch featured prominently has garnered more than two million views on YouTube. In the video, loose marijuana is prominently featured and Snoop uses cigars as blunt wraps and tears a package of Swisher Sweets in half, while singing “We ain’t f--in’ with them Swishers.”

A Twitter account that promotes the company’s videos has more than 5,000 followers, and the company’s Facebook page boasts more than 30,000 likes. ■



Above: Screen shot from the Executive Branch YouTube video. This video has nearly two million views.

Attorneys General Call on the FDA to Regulate E-Cigarettes

By *BETSY BROCK*

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has the authority to regulate e-cigarettes as tobacco products. However, the FDA has not acted on this authority. In September, Attorneys General from 41 states, including Minnesota, sent a letter to FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg calling on the agency to “take all available measures” to begin

regulating the devices before the end of October. The letter said, “We ask the FDA to move quickly to ensure that all tobacco products are tested and regulated to ensure that companies do not continue to sell or advertise to our nation’s youth...” The letter came on the heels of research findings from the Centers for Disease Control that found the percentage of high school students who have tried e-cigarettes doubled from 2011-2012 (5 percent to 10 percent). ■



TOBACCO MARKETING UPDATE

E-Cigarette Companies Market Products as “Green”

By CHRIS FARMER-LIES

An estimated 4.5 billion cigarette butts are tossed every year, making them the single most frequently littered item.

Several companies market their electronic cigarettes as more environmentally friendly than cigarettes. Green Smoke advertises a “clean & fresh smell,” for their “carbon monoxide free” electronic cigarette, with “no cigarette butts.” Eversmoke “reduce(s) your environmental footprint while allowing you to enjoy smoking and get the nicotine your body craves.”

Most disposable and rechargeable electronic cigarettes use lithium ion or lithium polymer batteries. These batteries contain heavy metals, such as lead, chromium, and cobalt, and also pose a fire hazard. Lithium ion batteries in particular can leach hazardous chemicals into landfills, soil, and bodies of water. While the metals and plastics used in the device may also be recycled, electronic cigarettes are more likely to be thrown away due to the labor involved and the types of plastics used in manufacturing.

Two brands, blu and NJOY, make up about 80 percent of the electronic cigarette market. blu’s website and a customer service representative say the battery is a “use and toss” product made of recyclable materials. However, another page on the blu website instructs users to soak the battery in salt water for at least two weeks before disposal. The user manual, which might be the only instructions a user receives, does not mention how to dispose of the unit. Njoy will send customers a free Njoy King in exchange for eight depleted units, but otherwise does not instruct customers on proper disposal. Other, less well-known brands do not offer a similar recycling program, and disposal instructions are practically nonexistent. ♦

Questions or Comments?

Please contact Betsy Brock at

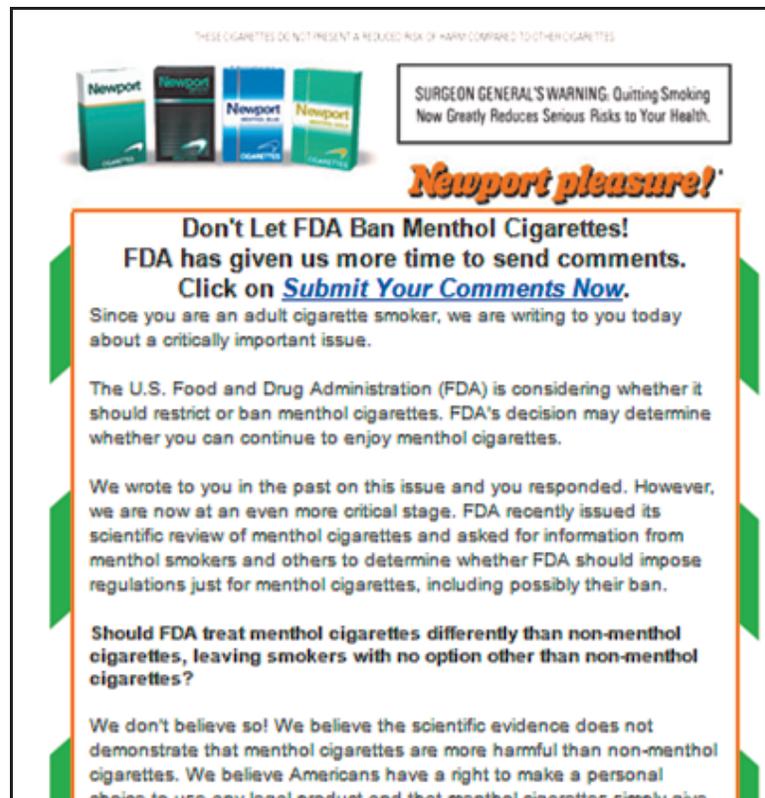
651-646-3005 or

betsy@ansrmn.org

Lorillard Urges Newport Smokers to Contact the FDA

By BETSY BROCK

Lorillard, the tobacco company that manufactures Newport cigarettes, has been sending out emails urging customers to contact the FDA about menthol cigarettes. The FDA is considering action on menthol cigarettes, which could mean the agency is considering a prohibition on menthol flavoring in cigarettes. Lorillard knows such an action would be catastrophic to the company’s market share as Newport, the company’s primary brand, is mentholated. The company is urging consumers to write to the FDA and ask them to “not ban menthol cigarettes.” ■



Above: Screen shot of email sent by Lorillard. The subject line reads “Don’t Let FDA Ban Menthol Cigarettes!” The body of the email states: “We believe the scientific evidence does not demonstrate that menthol cigarettes are more harmful than non-menthol cigarettes. We believe Americans have a right to make a personal choice to use any legal product and that menthol cigarettes simply give adult smokers a taste choice.”