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Robert Iger, CEO
THE DISNEY COMPANY
500 S. Buena Vista St.
Burbank, CA 91521-9722

Dear Mr. Iger:

This Office and Attorneys General from numerous states have repeatedly called upon the motion picture industry to take a leadership role in protecting the health and lives of our children by eliminating depictions of smoking in movies rated G, PG, and PG-13.

As we have previously discussed, the Dartmouth Medical School released a study in June 2003 that confirmed that reducing smoking depictions in movies could drastically decrease youth smoking initiation. In response to this study, Attorneys General from across the country urged then MPAA President Jack Valenti and other industry representatives to eliminate depictions of tobacco in youth-rated movies. Nevertheless, in July 2006, the America Legacy Foundation and the Dartmouth Medical School reported that the amount of tobacco use or imagery contained in youth-rated movies had not significantly changed since 1996.

In April 2007, the Harvard School of Public Health called on the film industry to "Take substantive and effective action to eliminate the depiction of tobacco smoking from films accessible to children and youths, and take leadership and credit for doing so." This recommendation was based on compelling peer-reviewed research that found that viewing smoking in movies, after controlling for all other known contributing factors, promotes the initiation of smoking in adolescents. Mr. Glickman assured the Attorneys General he would work to "gain consensus among the MPAA member companies on Harvard's pending recommendations, and then begin implementation." In May 2007, the MPAA announced it was changing the way the rating system considered smoking. Subsequent analysis by the University of California, however, has identified no rating consequences for films with tobacco imagery, nor any decline in annual totals of tobacco incidents in PG-13 films.

When I and other Attorneys General met with MPAA member studios in 2003, studio representatives questioned whether there was any evidence that smoking in movies was linked not only to initiation, but to youth becoming *regular* smokers. That evidence is now here.

The Dartmouth Medical School has recently released research finding that early exposure to depictions of smoking in movies predicts *established* smoking by older teens and young adults. Based on seven years of follow-up, researchers conclude that exposure to depictions of smoking in movies significantly raises the risk of progression to established smoking, even after taking into account other known risk factors for smoking. The study estimates that 34.9% of established smoking in older teens and young adults can be attributed to their previous exposure to on-screen depictions of smoking.

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As the Attorneys General said in their first letter to Jack Valenti in August 2003: "The motion picture industry . . . is uniquely situated to bring about sweeping change to prevent youth smoking. . . . We are hopeful you will use your best efforts . . . to rally the motion picture industry to move from being a source of the problem to being recognized as a critically important force in solving the nation's deadly problem of youth smoking."

I applaud the actions some studios have taken. Some, but not all, have introduced smoking prevention and other anti-tobacco spots before films that contain smoking. Such spots are proven to be effective in helping to combat smoking among youth. In addition, one studio displays as part of the movie credits a certification of its due diligence affirming that no compensation was received in exchange for any tobacco depiction. I encourage all studios to take such actions.

More importantly, however, I urge all studios to fulfill the Harvard School of Public Health's recommendation that studios *eliminate* the depiction of tobacco use from films accessible to youth. The evidence of its negative consequences is now inescapable. Moreover, as this evidence grows, it is clear that every time the industry releases another movie that depicts smoking, it does so with full knowledge of the deadly harm it will bring to the children who watch it.

Sincerely,


William H. Sorrell
Attorney General of Vermont

cc: Alaska Attorney General Rich Svobodny
Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard
Arkansas Attorney General Dustin McDaniel
Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal
Delaware Attorney General Joseph R. "Beau" Biden
District of Columbia Attorney General Peter Nickles
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