

# ✓ Cigarette machine ban lifted

## Unincorporated-area bars granted reversal

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After more than two dozen bar operators showed up to protest the ban on cigarette vending machines in the unincorporated parts of Santa Cruz County, the board of supervisors Tuesday reversed part of the prohibition they'd adopted a week earlier.

Supervisors voted last week to ban the machines entirely — after hearing testimony that many youngsters who smoke get their cigarettes from the coin-operated devices. The prohibition was sweeping, banning the machines from bars where minors are not allowed as well as from all other restaurants and public places.

### Board voted 4-1

But Tuesday, after bar owners complained that the ordinance was needless since minors aren't allowed in their establishments anyway, board members voted 4-1 to amend the prohibition.

Under the amended ordinance, cigarette vending machines will be allowed in bars with state licenses issued to bars only, and not to bars connected with restaurants or any other type of public establishment.

Only Supervisor Gary Patton dissented. He said he felt the county's ordinance should be consistent with a total ban adopted by the Watsonville City Council.

### Exemption 'makes sense'

Board Chairman Fred Keeley said he was comfortable with allowing the exception to the vending machine prohibition.

"I don't smoke and I don't think anyone should," Keeley said Tuesday, "but I feel this is an exemption that makes sense.

Keeley said his decision was based partly on testimony of some county health department officials who admitted they knew of no incidents in the unincorporated portions of the area where youngsters used vending machines in bars only to purchase cigarettes.