



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
BILL LOCKYER  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Denise F. Keane  
Senior Vice President and General Counsel  
Philip Morris U.S.A.  
120 Park Avenue  
New York, NY 10017-5592

RE: Philip Morris Book Covers

Dear Ms. Keane:

Thank you for your March 13, 2001, letter informing me that Philip Morris will discontinue distribution of its book covers to schools.

We commend Philip Morris for stopping the unsolicited distribution of book covers displaying the Philip Morris name and the Surgeon General's warning, along with artwork which some people believe contradicts the ostensible youth smoking prevention message. You did not respond, however, to our call for an immediate recall, as described in my February 22<sup>nd</sup> letter. I reiterate my request that you either commit to an immediate recall of all book covers sent to California schools or, alternatively, advise how many book covers you distributed to schools in California and the names and locations of the schools involved. My office can then ensure that any remaining book covers are removed from the schools.

I am very concerned, because even though Philip Morris has agreed to stop distributing book covers, it continues to inundate children with its ineffective "Think. Don't Smoke" message in other situations. While you indicated in your letter that Philip Morris had conducted quantitative research confirming "that these covers clearly communicated a 'Don't Smoke' message to children," I believe your research is flawed. In 1999, Teenage Research Unlimited conducted a study with youth between the ages of 12 and 16, comparing the effect of hard-hitting ads used in anti-tobacco media campaigns in four States, including California, with Philip Morris ads using the "Think. Don't Smoke" theme. One of the key findings of the study was that the ads used by the States, which graphically, dramatically, and emotionally portray the serious, negative



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effects of smoking, were consistently rated the highest in terms of making youth stop and think about not using tobacco. The response to the Philip Morris ads was that they did not provide any good reasons not to smoke. Some of the children said those ads “sound like our parents,” by commanding them (rather than showing them why) not to smoke. Additionally, weak, ineffective ads, like Philip Morris’s, dilute the efforts and the efforts of the American Legacy Foundation to deter smoking by minors by running ham-hitting campaigns.

Corky Newton, the recently retired Vice President of Corporate Responsibility and Youth Smoking Prevention at Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company, agrees that the “Don’t Smoke” message is ineffective in dissuading teens from smoking. In her newly published book about how to protect teenagers from smoking, Ms. Newton claims that teenagers think of the word “don’t” as a challenge to rebel. They dislike being told “don’t,” and everyone knows such a message is an ineffective form of communicating rules to teenagers.

I have recently received complaints about Philip Morris’s new marketing scheme using the “Think. Don’t Smoke” message. Parents whose teens subscribe to *Teen People* complained that the March edition contained a large two-page insert with stickers on heavy stock displaying this message.

If Philip Morris is truly concerned about ensuring that America’s youth do not start smoking, the most effective step your company can take is immediately to stop these self-promotional campaigns which use ineffective anti-smoking messages and dilute the anti-smoking messages employed by the States and the Legacy Foundation. Philip Morris should not be in the business of trying to educate school children on this issue, especially because Marlboro is far and away the leading brand among children.

I urge that Philip Morris take these actions without delay.

Sincerely,

BILL LOCKYER  
Attorney General