

# Tobacco industry seeks approval to sell 'light' cigarettes overseas

*The Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — A group of tobacco companies asked a federal judge Thursday to let them continue marketing "low tar" and "light" cigarettes overseas, two weeks after she banned the practice in the United States.

U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler ruled Aug. 17 that the nation's top cigarette makers violated racketeering laws and deceived the public about the hazards of smoking.

Kessler ordered the companies to stop using terms such as "light" on their products, saying such cigarettes are no safer than others. She also ordered the companies to publish in newspapers and on their Web sites

"corrective statements" on the adverse health effects and addictiveness of smoking.

In court documents filed Thursday, tobacco lawyers asked Kessler to clarify that ruling to let them continue their marketing practices and selling so-called "light" and "low-tar" cigarettes overseas.

Banning the use of the low tar descriptors in foreign countries would be an unwarranted intrusion upon the right of these countries to regulate cigarette sales within their own borders, attorneys wrote.

Prohibiting such marketing would put U.S. cigarette companies at a disadvantage in the international market, attorneys said. Overseas markets represent a growth area

for tobacco sales, industry executives have said.

The companies also asked Kessler to exempt international markets from an order forcing them to post signs in stores saying cigarettes are dangerous and addictive and that tobacco companies have manipulated them to deliver nicotine to smokers.

"Only an industry that has survived for 50 years by deceiving the American public on a continuing and regular basis would have trouble complying with an order that tells them to simply tell the truth," said Matthew Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-free kids.