



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

March 7, 2012

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H.B. No. 5332- AN ACT CONCERNING SMOKING IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND THE EXEMPTION FOR TOBACCO BARS.

The Department of Public Health supports House Bill Number 5332.

Any reduction in the exposure of Connecticut residents to secondhand smoke is beneficial. The U.S. Surgeon General has re-confirmed that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Inhaling tobacco smoke that contains more than 7,000 chemicals causes adverse health outcomes, particularly cancer and cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases. At least 69 of the chemicals in cigarettes are known to cause cancer, and one in five deaths in the United States are caused by cigarettes.¹

The risk and severity of many of these adverse outcomes are directly related to the duration and level of exposure to tobacco smoke. However, the danger is immediate, and poisons in secondhand smoke can trigger sudden blood clots, heart attacks, and strokes.

Establishing smoke-free environments is the only proven way to prevent exposure, as research has shown that secondhand smoke cannot be controlled by ventilation, and that creating separate areas for tobacco use does not eliminate the hazard of secondhand smoke exposure.

The implementation of smoke-free policies has an immediate positive effect on public health, and there is strong evidence that smoke-free laws result in decreased hospital admissions for heart attacks.

The Department respectfully requests amending the language in line 53 after the language "on-site sale of tobacco products" to include "any other smoking devices." This would make sure that sellers of new alternatives, such as electronic cigarettes, that claim not to hold tobacco but which appear to contain cancer-causing chemicals, would also be covered under this statute.

This bill promotes a policy that makes good public health sense and will result in a savings in health care costs for Connecticut residents.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease: A Report of the Surgeon General.* 2010

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