



NEW YORKERS DESERVE SMOKEFREE AIR!

Support Intro 332! Smokefree Public Parks, Beaches & Pedestrian Plazas

The Council has the opportunity to protect ALL New Yorkers from the harms of secondhand smoke, and most of your constituents are in favor of such action. A 2009 NYC Zogby poll shows nearly 2/3 of New Yorkers support laws banning smoking at outdoor recreational places, including parks, ball fields and playgrounds.

*You are well within your right to take action to prohibit smoking in public areas. The laws grant protection against those involuntarily harmed by toxic substances. Secondhand smoke is a toxic substance containing more than 4,000 substances, more than 50 of which are known or suspected to cause cancer in humans and animals. NYC should join the 700 other state and local governments that have already passed laws restricting outdoor smoking. **All New Yorkers deserve the right to breathe healthy air at our public parks, beaches and pedestrian plazas!***

- Small levels of secondhand smoke have been linked to allergies, asthma attacks, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), ear infections, and cardiovascular problems.
- Nearly 60% of non-smoking New Yorkers show an elevated level of cotinine, a by-product of tobacco use, in their blood. This shows that our residents have been exposed to second-hand smoke, despite smoking being banned in most indoor locations.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has classified secondhand smoke as a “Group A” known carcinogen placing it in the same category as radon, benzene, and asbestos.
- The U.S. Surgeon General has declared that there is “no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Breathing even a little secondhand smoke can be harmful to your health.”
- Because their lungs are smaller, children breathe in 50% more air pollution than adults. They are more susceptible to the dangers associated with tobacco smoke even when outdoors.
- Over 200 municipalities in NYS have passed regulations restricting tobacco use in outdoor recreational areas. Cities including Chicago and Los Angeles have already made their parks smokefree. Maine & Puerto Rico have made their beaches smokefree.
- Cigarette butts are the most common form of litter on parks & beaches and puts children, pets and wildlife at risk. Cigarettes, made of plastic cellulose acetate, may take as much as 18 months to decompose in the environment.
- The legal purchase of cigarettes and the physical action of smoking the product are two separate legal issues. Smokers do not have the right to use a product they obtained legally in all areas. (ie. Prohibition of alcoholic beverages in outdoor areas)
- Many activities which create health risks - like vehicles, power plants, etc. – have a benefit to citizens, and therefore it is not unreasonable to expect all citizens to share that portion of the risk, (even as we seek to limit those risks i.e. clean energy buses, green taxi legislation, and cleaner power plants). The overwhelming majority of citizens do not benefit from the use of cigarettes; it is unreasonable to expect that every citizen share the health risks associated with cigarettes.