

**ALPHA Resolution 2017-  
Support for Statewide Legislation for Smoke-free Workplaces in Alaska**

Whereas, Secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including at least 69 of which are known to cause cancer<sup>1</sup>, including formaldehyde, benzene, vinyl chloride, arsenic, ammonia and hydrogen cyanide<sup>2</sup>, and people who are exposed to secondhand smoke are inhaling many of the same cancer-causing substances and poisons as smokers<sup>3</sup>; and

Whereas, Numerous studies have found that tobacco smoke is a major contributor to indoor air pollution and that breathing secondhand smoke is a cause of disease in healthy nonsmokers<sup>4</sup>, including heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease and lung cancer<sup>2</sup>; and

Whereas, The 2006 U.S. Surgeon General's Report, *"The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke,"* concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke; ventilation and other air cleaning technologies cannot eliminate exposure of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke; and smokefree workplace policies are the only effective way to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure in the workplace<sup>4</sup>; and

Whereas, The 2010 U.S. Surgeon General's Report, *"How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease,"* determined that even occasional exposure to secondhand smoke is harmful<sup>5</sup>; and

Whereas, There are serious questions about the safety of inhaling the substances in some e-cigarette aerosol, and e-cigarettes have not been subject to thorough, independent testing, making it difficult for users to be sure of what they are actually inhaling. And some studies have shown that some e-cigarettes can cause short-term lung changes and irritations and the long-term health effects, are unknown<sup>10</sup>; and

Whereas, For every nine smokers who die, one nonsmoker dies from exposure to secondhand smoke<sup>6</sup>; and

Whereas, approximately half of Alaska's population is not protected by a smokefree workplace law<sup>7</sup>; and

Whereas, among those who work primarily indoors, young adults aged 18 to 29 are significantly less likely to be protected by a smokefree indoor workplace policy than other Alaskan adults<sup>8</sup>; and

Whereas, Research in communities where smokefree laws have been adopted has consistently shown neutral or positive economic effects to the hospitality industry following a smokefree workplace requirement<sup>9</sup>; and

Whereas, Smokefree workplace laws protect people from secondhand smoke<sup>4</sup>, reduce tobacco use overall and reduce health care costs<sup>6</sup>; and

Whereas, all Alaskans have the right to breathe smokefree air;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ALPHA urges the Alaska state legislation to enact a statewide comprehensive smokefree law, prohibiting smoking and use of e-cigarettes, for all workplaces and public places.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ALPHA will:

- Inform its members and, whenever possible, the general public of its endorsement of this Resolution; and,
- Allow ALPHA to forward a copy of this resolution to members of the Alaska legislature and other government officials.

FISCAL IMPACT ON ALPHA: This action will result in minor costs associated with sending this resolution and accompanying cover letter to Alaska legislators and other government officials.

PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT: Enacting legislation to prohibit smoking in workplaces and public places dramatically improves indoor air quality and helps to improve the health of workers and the general population by protecting them from the many harmful toxins found in second hand smoke and the associated health risks of inhaling second hand smoke. These laws have been shown to also encourage smokers to quit and prevent kids from starting to smoke.

Sources:

1. U.S. Surgeon General, *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease*, 2010.
2. American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, *The Facts About Secondhand Smoke*, 2012.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke*, [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/secondhand\\_smoke/health\\_effects/#lung](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/health_effects/#lung).
4. U.S. Surgeon General, *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Secondhand Smoke*, 2006.
5. U.S. Surgeon General, *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease Fact Sheet*, 2010, [www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/tobaccosmoke/factsheet.html](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/tobaccosmoke/factsheet.html).
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses—United States, 2000–2004*. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2008; 57(45):1226–8.
7. Tobacco Program Records, 2012 and Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development 2011 Population estimates. [www.almis.labor.state.ak.us/pop/popest.htm](http://www.almis.labor.state.ak.us/pop/popest.htm).
8. Alaska Department of Health and Human Services, 2012 Alaska Tobacco Facts, 2012.
9. Eriksen, Michael & Frank Chaloupka. *The Economic Impact of Clean Indoor Air Laws*. CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians. 2007. <http://caonline.amcancersoc.org/cgi/content/full/57/6/367>.
10. American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, *Commonly Asked Questions about Electronic Cigarettes*, 2014.