



Carlton – Cook – Lake – St. Louis Community Health Board

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Dear Itasca County Board of Commissioners,

As the Director of the Carlton-Cook-Lake-St. Louis Community Health Board, I am writing to encourage your support, to prohibit use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) in restaurants, workplaces and other indoor public spaces in Itasca County. This ordinance will treat e-cigarettes the same as conventional cigarettes, under Itasca County's Clean Indoor Air policy, and will align with current recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health and the American Lung Association.

E-cigarettes are not yet regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Without regulation, there is no oversight or control of chemicals contained in these products, or of its sale and use. Studies have shown that e-cigarette aerosol contains varying levels of nicotine, heavy metals, formaldehyde, and other known cancer-causing substances. The potential harm that may be caused to people exposed to secondhand emissions from e-cigarettes is not yet fully known. Two initial studies have found formaldehyde, benzene and tobacco-specific nitrosamines (all carcinogens) coming from those secondhand emissions. In light of these studies, permitting people to use and exhale these toxic chemicals into the shared air of public places is unacceptable.

When the e-cigarette ordinance was proposed, and then implemented in St. Louis County, several business owners offered their support for the ordinance, in order to provide clean air for their patrons and employees. Business owners also supported the ordinance, to reduce the time that employees had to spend, to determine whether patrons were using regular cigarettes, or an e-cigarette that looked like a conventional cigarette.

Allowing e-cigarettes in public places, risks a re-normalization of smoking behavior, which increases the risk for pre-teens and adolescents to experiment with e-cigarettes or other tobacco products.

The proposed prohibition on e-cigarette use in restaurants, workplaces and other public indoor spaces will help keep kids and adults safe, and our indoor air clean. Twenty-one counties and thirty cities in Minnesota have added e-cigarettes to their clean indoor air policies.

I appreciate your consideration of this important policy change, in support of the health of all residents of Itasca County.

Sincerely,

Louise Anderson

Director

Carlton-Cook-Lake-St. Louis Community Health Board