

SMOKE FREE CARS, SMOKE FREE KIDS

PROTECT OUR KIDS BY CLEARING THE AIR

SB 444

- Due to the dangers of second hand smoke (SHS) for children, SB 444 seeks to ban smoking in cars with minors present.
- The law will only be enforced as a secondary violation, which means the police officer can only enforce it if the car is pulled over for a separate traffic violation.
- Smoking in a car with a minor present would become a Class D traffic violation for a first offense (max fine of \$250) and a Class C traffic violation for a second or subsequent offense (max fine of \$500).

The Unique Vulnerability of Children and Secondhand Smoke

- The US Surgeon General has concluded SHS can cause serious health problems and there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke. The 2006 Surgeon General's report concludes that: "Children exposed to SHS are at an increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and more severe asthma. Smoking by parents causes respiratory symptoms and slows lung growth in their children."¹
- Exposure to SHS can cause asthma in children who have not previously shown any symptoms. In addition, children who have asthma feel worse symptoms and have an increased number of attacks.²
- Asthma is the leading chronic illness among children and the #1 cause of school absenteeism due to chronic illness. It accounts for 10.5 million lost school days annually.³
- One study has shown the concentration of air nicotine levels to be higher in cars than in bars or restaurants that allow smoking. SHS in motor vehicles can be up to 27 times more concentrated than in a smoker's home.⁴
- By the time it takes to smoke half a cigarette, the air quality in a parked car can reach up to 10 times the hazardous level on the EPA's Air Quality Index. Whether the car is moving or parked, the windows are opened or cracked, the air quality level remains in the hazardous zone, with smoke often pooling in the back seat.

Smoke Free Legislation Nationwide

- Five States (AR, CA, LA, ME, UT), Puerto Rico and Guam have already passed smoke free cars with minors legislation, with an additional 9 counties or cities passing similar smoke free cars with kids laws.
- Oregon and 16 other states already ban smoking in cars transporting foster children.⁵
- California Department of Public Health conducted a study on the effects of California's new smoke free cars law and the impact on preventing smoking in cars. They found a reduction in SHS exposure in a car among youth was observed in 2008 compared to the previous survey during 2006-2007. The study in 2007-2008 found that one-fifth of students (22.7%) reported being in a car with someone smoking cigarettes in the previous 7 days. This percentage was significantly decreased from the study in 2005-2006, which reported 26.1% of students in cars with smokers.⁶

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General: Secondhand Smoke: What It Means To You. [accessed 2/11/13].

² Environmental Protection Agency. Health Effects of Exposure to Secondhand Smoke: Smoke-free Homes and Cars Program. <http://www.epa.gov/smokefre/healtheffects.html>. [accessed 2/4/13].

³ American Lung Association in Colorado. Asthma. <http://www.lungusa.org/associations/states/colorado/asthma/>. [accessed 2/4/13].

⁴ California Environmental Protection Agency, California Air Resources Board. Proposed Identification of Environmental Tobacco Smoke as a Toxic Air Contaminant. 2005. http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/ets/vehicle_ets.htm

⁵ Global Advisors Smoke Free Policy. Smoke-free Vehicles When Children are Present. [accessed 2/18/13].

⁶ California Department of Public Health. California's New Smoke-Free Car Law with Children.



Cost Savings:

- Approximately 42% of OR children are covered by the Oregon Health Plan (OHP). In 2011 OHP reports they covered approximately 3,568 ER visits for asthma. Reducing exposure to SHS can reduce OHP costs for asthma related care.
- There are 74 instances over the last 10 years (2003-2012) on Oregon Department of Forestry-protected lands when people caused wildfires by throwing cigarettes or cigars from their vehicles. The fires consumed 175 acres and the cost of suppression was \$153,643 (note these are only fires that occurred on ODF lands).