

From the Desk of
Rep. Jim Thompson

Dear Colleagues,

For the health and future of Oregon's kids, we support Senate Bill 444.

The evidence in favor of limiting children's exposure to tobacco smoke in cars is irrefutable. Studies show that when someone is smoking in a car, it creates one of the most hazardous environments for young lungs. Included on the back of this letter is the EPA's Air Quality Index. The most severe alert, the hazardous "maroon" level, is the level where the entire public, not just vulnerable populations are warned, "stay inside or risk serious detriments to your health." The toxicity of the air in a car when someone is smoking is literally off the charts, reaching ten times the EPA's most hazardous "maroon" level.

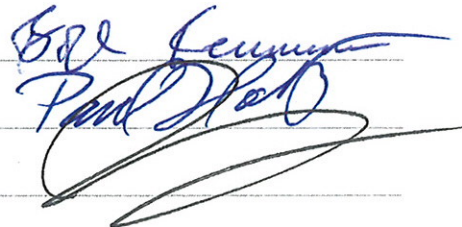
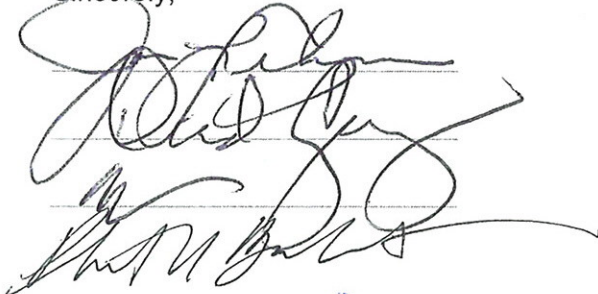
It's estimated that children in 50,000 Oregon families are exposed to smoke in cars each year. This number brings with it serious health and cost implications. Secondhand smoke is a leading trigger of asthma attacks requiring hospitalization. Last year, emergency room asthma attack visits among children enrolled in Healthy Kids cost the state \$1 million. Many of these attacks are preventable.

As legislators, we can do our part to inform the public of these serious health risks, and we have a strong record of success in championing for the health and safety of our children. In the 1990's after starting a public education campaign, the Oregon Legislature passed the child safety restraint bill. As a result, we saw proper use of child safety seats jump from 30 percent to over 80 percent. SB 444 is a great opportunity to create a new educational tool and continue our legacy of protecting Oregon kids.

While the evidence speaks for itself, the most compelling reasons for our support are personal. Those who support this bill have struggled themselves or have watched friends and family members struggle to quit. We've witnessed serious health issues that could have been prevented. In the worst of outcomes, we've had the lives of our loved ones cut short. It only makes sense to use one of the most proven tools we have at our disposal to protect our most vulnerable; therefore we urge your support for SB 444.

Please join us in supporting Senate Bill 444.

Sincerely,



Rep. Thompson, Rep. Kennemer, Rep. Conger, Rep. Gombert, Rep. Holvey, Rep. Keny-Guyer, Rep. Barnhart

Air Quality Index (AQI) – Air Quality and Health Impacts

The AQI is an index for reporting daily air quality. It tells you how clean or polluted your air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you. Think of the AQI as a yardstick that runs from 0 to 500. The higher the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution and the greater the health concern.

Air Quality Index (AQI) Values	Levels of Health Concern	Colors
When the AQI is in this range:	..air quality conditions are:	...as symbolized by this color:
0-50	Good	Green
51-100	Moderate	Yellow
101-150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Orange
151 to 200	Unhealthy	Red
201 to 300	Very Unhealthy	Purple
301 to 500	Hazardous	Maroon

Each category corresponds to a different level of health concern. "Hazardous" AQI is greater than 300. This would trigger a health warning of emergency conditions. Everyone may experience more serious health effects.

Source: <http://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=aqibasics.aqi>

Smoking in A Car Levels: Tests windows up vs. down, moving vs. stationary. EQI measures 2000-6000 EQI (An EQI of 301 is considered Hazardous)

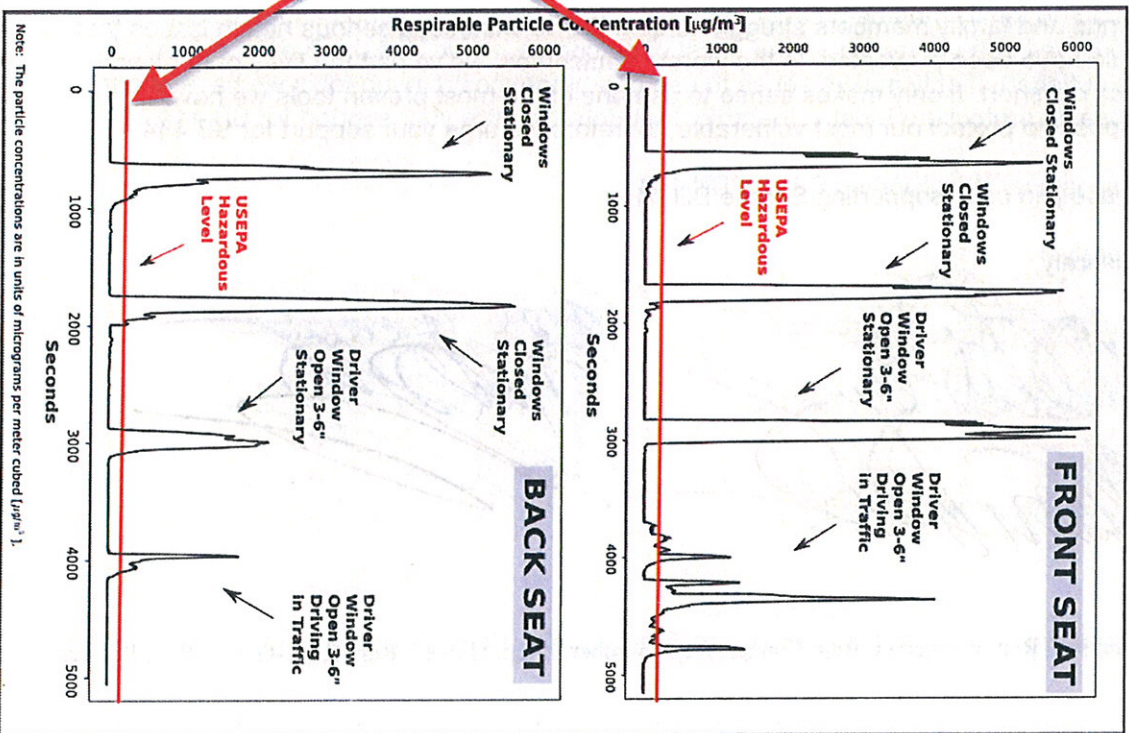


Chart from Smoke-free Cars with Kids: A Scientific Demonstration of Secondhand Smoke Exposure video, Provided by Neil Klepeis, Ph.D., Human Exposure & Environmental Health Scientist