

† AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION®

OF THE MOUNTAIN PACIFIC

Serving Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming

From the Desk of
Senator
Steiner Hayward

7420 SW Bridgeport Road
Suite 200
Tigard, OR 97224-7790

March 13, 2013

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Oregon State Senate
Oregon State Capitol Building
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Please support SB 444, Relating to smoking in a motor vehicle when minor present

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the American Lung Association of the Mountain Pacific, serving Oregon, we would like to share our support of Senate Bill 444. We hope the Senate shares our goal of protecting the health of all children in Oregon from secondhand smoke and will work to move this bill forward.

Children, especially the youngest who are strapped into car seats, have little control over their environment when adults are smoking in a car. Unfortunately it is an all-too-common experience. Here are some of the personal stories we've heard from Oregonians who have been affected by this issue:

Kris W. from Crook County was raised in a family of smokers. She vividly remembers being stuck between her grandparents in the front seat of the station wagon with her grandfather inadvertently dropping hot ashes on her legs on his way to the ashtray.

Christina S., a young professional from Portland, grew up with a dad who would often smoke in the family car. She remembers he would roll the window down about an inch, thinking it would pull the smoke out of the car. Unfortunately for Christina, this wasn't the case and she would always smell (and be exposed to) the smoke. Christina feels strongly that this bill would help educate parents, like her dad, about the dangers of secondhand smoke to kids when traveling in a vehicle.

Fighting for Air

Infants and young children are especially vulnerable to the toxins in secondhand smoke, because their bodies are developing. **Eighty percent of lung development occurs after birth.**¹ Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome, acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and asthma.

(over)

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The small, enclosed space of a car makes secondhand smoke even more dangerous. **Secondhand smoke in motor vehicles can be up to 27 times more concentrated than in a smoker's home.**ⁱⁱ 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.ⁱⁱⁱ On a hazardous level day, the EPA issues warnings to everyone, including healthy individuals, to stay inside or risk serious health effects. Whether the car is moving or parked, the windows opened or cracked, the air quality level remains in the hazardous zone, with smoke often pooling in the back seat.

EPA Air Quality Index

Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	Meaning
Good	0 to 50	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
Unhealthy	151 to 200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.
Hazardous	301 to 500	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.

Lastly, other motor vehicle laws designed to protect the health of children include seatbelt requirements and proper use of infant and child car seats. **After legislators passed Oregon's child car seat legislation, drivers increased their proper usage from 30 percent to over 80 percent.**^{iv}

Let's work to protect all our kids from secondhand smoke in vehicles and pass Senate Bill 444 to clear the air.

With Highest Regards,

Colleen Hermann-Franzen, Advocacy & Communications Manager
American Lung Association of the Mt. Pacific – Serving Oregon

ⁱ Dietert RR, et al. *Workshop to identify critical windows of exposure for children's health: immune and respiratory systems work group summary*. Environmental Health Perspectives, June 2000; 108(Suppl 3):483-90.

ⁱⁱ California Environmental Protection Agency, California Air Resources Board, Proposed Identification of Environmental Tobacco Smoke as a Toxic Air Contaminant (2005), available at: http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/cts/vehicle_ets.htm (visited 9/19/11).

ⁱⁱⁱ Video: *Smoke-free Cars with Kids: A Scientific Demonstration of Secondhand Smoke Exposure*, produced by the California Tobacco Control Program, 2008, available at: <http://vimeo.com/1513382> (visited 2/20/13)

^{iv} Interventions for promoting booster seat use in four to eight year olds travelling in motor vehicles (Review), available at: http://www.thecochranelibrary.com/userfiles/cooch/file/Safety_on_the_road/CD004334.pdf (visited 2/20/13)