



BOMA Oregon Supports Expanding Oregon Indoor Clean Air Act to Include E-cigarettes

BOMA Oregon supports HB 4115 which will regulate electronic cigarettes in Oregon and specifically includes e-cigarettes in the Oregon Indoor Clean Air Act. This would mean that e-cigarettes would be prohibited under the indoor smoking bans.

Known as e-cigarettes, the product first appeared on the market a decade ago but sales have grown exponentially in recent years with one in five American adults indicating they have tried them and nearly 1.8 million middle and high school students stating they have used them.

Touted by some in the industry as an alternative to tobacco, the Food and Drug Administration is considering classifying e-cigarettes as “tobacco products.” Like tobacco cigarettes, e-cigarettes contain nicotine and the nicotine levels in the cartridges that are loaded into the cigarette device can vary widely. Because the federal government hasn’t decided on how to proceed with e-cigarettes, states and local governments have taken steps to regulate them.

More than half the states have banned the sale of e-cigarettes to minors. And, because research remains limited on the possible ill-effects from second-hand vapor smoke, some states (Utah, North Dakota, Arkansas and New Jersey) have grouped the products with tobacco under indoor smoking bans.

HB 4115 will prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes to minors and to regulate them under the indoor smoking bans. Because of the unknown health concerns associated both with the safety of e-cigarettes and the potential ill-effects from their second-hand vapor smoke, BOMA Oregon supports the inclusion of e-cigarettes into the Oregon Indoor Clean Air Act. Additionally, approving HB 4115 helps remove building owners and managers from the role of “policing” their tenants and helps shield them from any potential liability that may result from exposure to second-hand smoke. Finally, just as was the case before the original Oregon Clean Indoor Air Act was adopted, some cities, counties and governmental agencies are moving ahead with their own indoor smoking bans on e-cigarettes. Rather than a hodge-podge of e-cigarette regulations, Oregon would be better served with a uniform policy.

BOMA Oregon, the Building Owners and Managers Association of Oregon, is a non-profit trade association that serves as the voice of the commercial building industry.

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