

Dear {Decision Maker / Elected Official}

Thank you for this opportunity to provide public input on the upcoming {General Plan / Housing Element / Environmental Justice Element / Safety Element}.

Our {organization / chamber / EDC} supports the inclusion of tobacco and nicotine product control restrictions to prevent youth exposure and eliminate secondhand and thirdhand smoke and vapor exposure in multi-family developments for the following reasons:

- Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, killing 480,000 persons per year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- According to the U.S. Surgeon General, there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke (which consists of smoke from a burning plant product and the smoke exhaled by a smoker). Eliminating indoor smoking is the only way to protect non-smokers from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke exposureⁱ.
- Families living in rental housing are more likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke.ⁱⁱ These families often have fewer options to move or otherwise have control over their home environments, which includes access to healthy, clean air for their families. A lack of smokefree housing therefore creates health disparities among those living in rental housing.
- Research has shown that secondhand smoke can drift from unit to unit through windows, doors, walls, hallways, and air ducts of multi-unit housing. More than 1 in 3 nonsmokers and 2 in 5 children who live in rental housing are exposed to secondhand smoke.ⁱⁱⁱ
- The home is the main place where children are exposed to secondhand smoke.^{iv} Children who live in multi-unit housing are significantly more exposed to secondhand smoke than children who live in single-family homes, even if no one smokes inside their apartment.^v
- Secondhand smoke becomes thirdhand smoke. That is, the tobacco smoke residue that is left behind when someone smokes indoors does not simply blow away. Instead, it sticks to surfaces such as walls, furniture and floors; pet's fur; and people's hair, skin and

clothing. This toxic residue builds up over time and can remain for years. Porous surfaces, like sofas and drywall, act as sponges and become penetrated by thirdhand smoke, which grows more toxic over time and is slowly released back into the air.

- Children are disproportionately exposed to thirdhand smoke because “they spend relatively more time indoors, they engage in activities close to the floor, they have hand-to-mouth behaviors, and they are more vulnerable to chemical exposure because of their immature metabolism.”^{vi}
- Children who live in apartments show a higher level of exposure to tobacco chemicals.^{vii}
- People who live in apartments are at higher risk for thirdhand smoke exposure because previous tenants may have smoked indoors. This means one person smoking indoors can affect a housing unit for all future tenants.
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recognizes the harmful effects of secondhand smoke and as of July 2018, prohibited smoking in HUD-funded public housing and within 25 feet of all indoor areas nationwide.
- A recent survey (YEAR) conducted by _____ that included multi-unit housing residents found that ___ percent of residents would prefer to live in a completely non-smoking building.
- The costs to property owners, and therefore renters, can be significant. The average cost of turning over an apartment that housed a smoker is \$5,000 more than one housed by a non-smoker.^{viii}
- Our General Plan supports {overall community health, etc.}.

Because of these factors, {I / we} strongly support secondhand and thirdhand smoke protections for our local families by including smokefree multi-unit housing goals in our General Plan and/or Housing Elements. Additionally, we support adopting a smokefree multi-unit housing ordinance. {I / We} believe that considering protections for our families will create a healthy and high standard of living for adults and children alike, contributing to a stronger and more resilient economy and community.

Local tobacco control projects and coalitions are available to discuss these ideas further and provide model language and other support. You can visit NorCal 4 Health at www.NorCal4Health.org for more information.

Sincerely,

ⁱ Office on Smoking and Health (US). The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US); 2006. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44324/> .

ⁱⁱ Vital Signs: Disparities in Nonsmokers' Exposure to Secondhand Smoke — United States, 1999–2012. https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6404a7.htm?s_cid=mm6404a7_w . Accessed 6 Oct. 2021.

ⁱⁱⁱ Secondhand Smoke: An Unequal Danger. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Office on Smoking and Health, Feb. 2015, <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/pdf/2015-02-vitalsigns.pdf> .

^{iv} Secondhand Smoke: An Unequal Danger. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Office on Smoking and Health, Feb. 2015, <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/pdf/2015-02-vitalsigns.pdf> .

^v Wilson, K. M., et al. "Tobacco-Smoke Exposure in Children Who Live in Multiunit Housing." *PEDIATRICS*, vol. 127, no. 1, Jan. 2011, pp. 85–92. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2010-2046>.

^{vi} Ramírez, Noelia, et al. "Exposure to Nitrosamines in Thirdhand Tobacco Smoke Increases Cancer Risk in Non-Smokers." *Environment International*, vol. 71, Oct. 2014, pp. 139–47. *ScienceDirect*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2014.06.012> .

^{vii} Matt, G., et al., Thirdhand tobacco smoke: emerging evidence and arguments for a multi-disciplinary research agenda. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 2011: p. 119(9): 1218-26.

^{viii} Economic Benefits of Smoke-Free Housing. ChangeLab Solutions, 2014, https://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Appendix_2-Economic-benefits-smokefree-housing_FINAL_20140417.pdf.