

+ **AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION**[®]
Fighting for Air

**American Lung Association
of the Northeast**

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March 11, 2015

The Honorable Cale P. Keable
Chairman, House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H 5627 - RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY - PUBLIC BEACH SMOKING POLLUTION CONTROL ACT

Dear Chairman Keable and Committee Members:

The American Lung Association in Rhode Island strongly supports H 5627, sponsored by Representative Carson, that would prohibit smoking and tobacco product littering on state beaches. The legislation would make smoking and/or disposal of tobacco products illegal on or within 20 feet of all public beaches under the control of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

The American Lung Association in Rhode Island supports tobacco-free beach policies principally on the grounds of the proven significant health dangers of breathing secondhand smoke. According to the United States Surgeon General, there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, of which hundreds are toxic and about 70 can cause cancer.

Since the 1964 Surgeon General's Report, 2.5 million Americans who were nonsmokers have died because of their exposure to secondhand smoke.

Some of the health conditions caused by secondhand smoke in adults include coronary heart disease, stroke and lung cancer. Secondhand smoke exposure causes numerous health problems in infants and children, including more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory and ear infections, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Of additional and secondary concern to us is that tobacco use on the beach generates cigarette butt litter, which is a toxic contaminant due to the fact that nicotine is a toxin. The nicotine in cigarette butt litter can pollute the water and soil. Birds, small animals, babies and children who ingest cigarette butts are at risk for nicotine poisoning.

All Rhode Islanders deserve to breathe clean, unpolluted air. Smoke free beach policies are good for the health of the public and the environment. Please support H 5627.

Sincerely,



Karina Holyoak Wood
Director, Public Policy
American Lung Association in Rhode Island