

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF HB 1229

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Good afternoon, Chairman Larsen and members of the Senate Industry and Business Committee. My name is Susan Kahler. I am a Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator at Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health. I am here on the behalf of the City of Bismarck to oppose HB 1229.

This bill would create a public health issue with exposure to secondhand smoke. I receive many phones and comments from citizens of Bismarck about how much they appreciate the Smoke Free Ordinance and State Law. As some you may recall the on April 11th, 2011, Bismarck voters laid the issue to rest, deciding for all that everyone, including bar workers and patrons, should be able to breathe clean indoor air and same thing in 2012 statewide.

The definition for smoking in the ND Smoke Free Law and local ordinances includes cigars. Cigars are also defined as tobacco in the ND Century Code as a tobacco product and are very similar to cigarettes; except they are wrapped in tobacco leaf. Cigar's produce secondhand smoke that contains the same toxic chemicals that secondhand cigarette smoke does. There is an abundance of scientific research on secondhand smoke and how it can cause or contribute to lung cancer and heart disease. Cigar smokers have the same risks to nicotine dependence as other tobacco product users.

Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings: none of these measures fully protect people from secondhand smoke. The only effective preventive measure is to eliminate smoking in indoor spaces completely. HB 1229 would allow individuals to smoke cigars and expose others to secondhand smoke plus be very difficult to enforce what tobacco products they are smoking inside this bar. Who will monitor this?

The ND Smoke Free Law was passed in 2012 to protect everyone from secondhand smoke exposure and provide equality for all. I, and on the behalf of the City of Bismarck Commission, oppose HB 1229. Thank you. This concludes my testimony. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.