

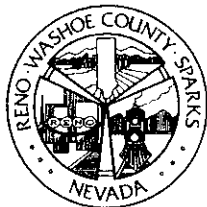
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DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

March 18, 2003

Assembly Committee on Judiciary
Nevada State Legislature
Carson City, NV 89701

Re: Assembly Bill 96

Position: Support

Dear Chairman Anderson and Committee Members,

Washoe County District Health Department and the Washoe County District Board of Health strongly support AB96, which would provide more smoke free environments across the state and give Boards of Health the option to adopt more stringent controls over tobacco than provided in state law.

The voters of Washoe County overwhelmingly supported the provisions of this bill in the November 2002 elections. Over fifty nine percent of the voters expressed support for the District Board of Health to adopt regulations that are stronger than state law in order to protect people from secondhand smoke. Nearly sixty eight percent supported stronger statewide prohibitions on secondhand smoke. A similar proportion of voters in Clark County also supported these initiatives.

Secondhand smoke has been classified as a Group A carcinogen by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). According to statistics compiled by the Nevada State Health Division, tobacco related illnesses cost Nevada residents \$440 million each year in medical expenses. This breaks down to \$303 for every Nevada resident 15 years of age and older. Of that, Nevada's Medicaid expenditures for tobacco-related illnesses cost \$96 million, a significant and preventable economic burden, which is especially dismaying at this time of fiscal crisis.

The most effective method for reducing secondhand smoke exposure and the costs associated with tobacco use is to provide smoke free environments. AB 96 provides you the opportunity to do that, and to carry out the will of the voters of Nevada's two most populous counties. I urge you to support AB 96.

Sincerely,

Barbara L. Hunt, RN, MPA
District Health Officer

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ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY

DATE: 3/18/03 ROOM: 3138 EXHIBIT D

SUBMITTED BY: BARBARA HUNT

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