

SECONDHAND SMOKE FACT:

Smoke-Free Workplace Laws Don't Hurt Business

WARNING: You don't have to smoke to die from it. Secondhand smoke kills.

Secondhand smoke - the smoke we breathe from other people's cigarettes - kills more than 65,000 people annually in the United States. *In fact, more people die from secondhand smoke than from automobile accidents and drug overdoses combined.*

Over 91% of West Virginia's population, those in 49 counties, have locally enforced clean indoor air (CIA) regulations. Whenever a regulation is proposed to protect workers and patrons from secondhand smoke in indoor places open to the public - such as restaurants, bars and offices - concerns are raised about possible harm to the hospitality industry. Many West Virginia county boards of health have adopted 100% CIA regulations, and enforcement of these policies DOES NOT hurt business or employees!

In every locality in the United States, *including West Virginia*, which has restricted or prohibited smoking in public places, research by government agencies, academic institutions and independent survey firms has shown no negative economic impact. Objective evidence such as comparing restaurant sales and receipts before and after smoking bans, the number of restaurants opening and closing, restaurant employment, tourism and market share data all document that the great majority of patrons, tourists and local residents alike, prefer smoke-free environments.

Smoke-free workplace laws can help employers cut business costs.

Businesses with smoke-free policies experience less absenteeism when nonsmoking employees are no longer exposed to secondhand smoke, which can trigger asthma attacks and other respiratory illnesses. Time off for illnesses and health insurance costs may decrease. Employers also see lower housekeeping and maintenance costs because they no longer need to clean ashtrays, sweep up cigarette butts, replace burnt carpeting, or clean fabrics and other materials nearly as often. And employers with smoke-free policies may also see lower liability insurance costs because of fewer smoking-related fires.

Many types of businesses that had long permitted smoking before prohibiting it have enjoyed growth and prosperity. It was not so many years ago that smoking was permitted in movie theaters, on trains, and on all airplane flights. Yet none of these businesses lost customers when they prohibited smoking.

Even the tobacco industry admits that smoke-free workplace laws don't hurt business:

"...the economic arguments often used by the industry to scare off smoking ban activity were no longer working. ...These arguments simply had no credibility with the public, which isn't surprising when you consider that our dire predictions in the past rarely came true."

Internal document, Philip Morris, 1994

Secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, such as formaldehyde, cyanide, ammonia, carbon monoxide, naphthalene (moth balls), cadmium (battery acid), and acetone (nail polish remover). More than 40 of these chemicals have been proven to cause cancer, including arsenic, benzene, and vinyl chloride, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has classified as "Group A" carcinogens. Research shows the concentration of these carcinogenic chemicals is actually higher in secondhand smoke than in the fumes inhaled directly by smokers.



Clean indoor air (CIA) regulations HAVE NOT hurt business in these West Virginia counties:

The following business data was obtained from researching the West Virginia Business and Economic Research website:

* The term "business" refers to food services and drinking establishments and "wages" refers to reported annual employee wages.

Berkeley County *100% CIA Regulation passed in 2001

Review: In the year following passage, 3 additional businesses opened, and wages increased by \$863,361.

Gilmer County *100% CIA Regulation passed in 1997

Review: Five years following passage, the county had 4 additional businesses (total of 10) and more than doubled reported wages (from \$515,695 in 1997 to \$1,263,843 in 2002, or an increase of \$748,148 annually).

Hampshire County *100% CIA Regulation passed in 1993

Review: The businesses were reported to have annually increasing employee wages (> \$400,000 annually).

Morgan County *100% CIA Regulation passed in 2001

Review: In the year following 100% CIA regulation passage, businesses were reported to have a small increase in number of employees and increased wages.

Pendleton County *100% CIA Regulation passed in 2001

Review: In the year following 100% CIA regulation passage, same number of businesses, and increased wages.

Preston County *100% CIA Regulation passed in 2001

Review: In the year following 100% CIA regulation passage, 1 more business was opened, there was a small increase in number of employees, and increased wages of \$264,883.

Taylor County *100% CIA Regulation passed in 1997

Review: Five years following passage, the county had 1 additional business (total of 15) and steadily increasing wages (from \$917,190 in 1997 to \$1,205,861 in 2002, an increase of \$288,671).

Upshur County *100% CIA Regulation passed in 1996

Review: Five years following passage, 3 more businesses reported, there were more hospitality workers, and steadily increasing wages.

Jefferson, Lincoln, Marshall, Nicholas, and Tucker Counties *100% CIA Regulation passed in 2002 or 2003

Review: *Too soon for correlating data

Local restaurant owners support going smoke-free...

"The environment is wonderful. I don't know how my husband, who has asthma, made it all those years before the smoking ban. It's a smart business move for all of us. With the bad economy everywhere, opening our business to everyone has kept business steady. Our regulars that are smokers are still coming in. And - we've had two employees quit smoking since the ban went into effect, so that's a good thing." **J and Claudette Atkinson, Owners, Mary's Restaurant, Kingwood, WV.**

"We opened our restaurant one year after the smoke-free regulation went into effect. Smoking causes too much damage to our businesses. It's been two years since the regulation went into effect - no one mentions it anymore." **Angela Miller, Owner, Star Hotel and Restaurant, Franklin, WV.**

"I anticipated that our business would have declined because we had a lot of smokers, but we have actually seen a continued growth in our business. **Joyce Brown, Owner of Blue and White Grill, Martinsburg, WV**

"We've never had any problems with being smoke-free; all the restaurants had to do it, so everyone just accepted it. Business remains busy, and I don't think anyone even thinks about it any more." **Shirley Hott, Owner, Shirley's Restaurant, Romney, WV.**

"After taking over a family restaurant that allowed smoking for over 40 years, it was a very difficult decision to become smoke-free. but if we had to do it all over again, we will still choose smoke-free. Business has been good, and we don't have the dirt and damage from the smoke."

-Dee Atkinson, Owner, Poky Dot Restaurant, Fairmont, WV