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Municipal League Endorses Statewide Smoking Ban

The New Mexico Municipal League is endorsing legislation to amend the Clean Indoor Air Act that would restrict smoking statewide.

House Bill 354, introduced by Rep. Al Park of Albuquerque and Senate Bill 515, introduced by Sen. John Grubestic of Santa Fe, aim to ban smoking in a majority of public places, including restaurants, work places and other public areas.

The League's Executive Committee voted to endorse a statewide Clean Indoor Air Act curbing second-hand smoke in public places. Cities like Roswell and Las Cruces have ordinances that restrict smoking in all public places. Both proposed measures would allow municipalities to promulgate their own ordinances, which could be more restrictive, as long as they meet the Act's minimum requirements.

"We are grateful to Senator Grubestic of Santa Fe for taking on the important health issue on a statewide level," said League President Carol Robertson Lopez, Santa Fe Mayor Pro Tem. "Santa Feans support our clean air laws."

Albuquerque City Councilor Eric Griego, who is the President-Elect of the League, said, "Albuquerque's experience with a smoking ban has proved that clean air is good for business – gross receipts from restaurants are up almost seven percent since the Albuquerque smoking ban was implemented."

Farmington Mayor William Standley, the League's Immediate Past President, said, "We are all aware of the dangers of second-hand smoke – it's a major health issue in every municipality and especially in the work

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Smoking Ban

Add one

place. It's time we step up to the plate and address our citizens' concerns."

Española City Councilor Joseph Maestas, the League's current Vice President, echoed the other's concerns about smoke being a serious health issue.

"The dangers of second-hand smoke and smoking as a 'gateway' drug to alcohol and other drugs are well known," Maestas said. "This legislative effort will serve to address those dangers and improve the health of communities like the City of Espanola."

Las Vegas Municipal Judge and League Treasurer Eddie A. Trujillo said, "Here we stand as elected officials always striving to 'set the example' for the youth of our community. What better way than to establish a Clean Air Act?"

The City of Roswell passed a similar local ordinance last year and has received public support.

"Roswell passed a Clean Air Act last year and since then we have received so much support for this bold decision, and the city council has unanimously passed a Resolution supporting these two bills," said Roswell Councilor and former League President Judy Stubbs.

The New Mexico Municipal League is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing all incorporated municipalities in New Mexico. The League is headquartered in Santa Fe.