



February 19, 2014

The Honorable Mitch O'Farrell
Chair
Arts, Parks, Health, Aging and River Committee
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Mitch O'Farrell,

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network is committed to protecting the health and well-being of the residents of Los Angeles. As such we support the draft ordinance to amend sections 41.50 and 63.44 of the Los Angeles Municipal code to revise the definition of smoking to include e-cigarettes and other electronic smoking devices.

The health effects of e-cigarettes – especially the longer-term effects – are scientifically uncertain. Currently, only a limited number of studies have examined the contents of e-cigarette vapor. Some of the studies have found the vapor to contain only propylene glycol, nicotine, and flavorings, and other studies found them to contain heavy metals, volatile organic compounds and tobacco-specific nitrosamines, among other ingredients. A 2009 study done by the FDA found cancer-causing substances in several of the e-cigarette samples tested. Additionally, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) tests found nicotine in some e-cigarettes that claimed to contain no nicotine.

There is general agreement among scientists in the field that, in the short run, at least, e-cigarettes are almost certainly less harmful than combusted cigarettes. But there are still serious questions about the safety of inhaling the substances in some e-cigarette vapor. E-cigarettes have not been subject to thorough, independent testing, so users cannot be sure of what they are actually inhaling. Some studies have shown that some e-cigarettes can cause short-term lung changes and irritations and the long-term health effects, as noted above, are unknown. Additionally, the effects of secondhand vapor from e-cigarettes require further study, especially to determine differences among the many brands and types of e-cigarettes.

In addition, allowing the use of electronic smoking devices in public places where smoking is otherwise prohibited can create confusion with enforcement issues as well as there are concerns that they may create new tobacco users and reverse efforts that have made smoking socially unacceptable.