



April 28, 2015

The Honorable Eric Garcetti
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Resolution 15-0002-S25 [SB 591 (Pan)] – Support

Dear Mayor Garcetti and Members of the Council:

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is the nation's leading voice advocating for public policies that are helping defeat cancer. We are writing in support to Resolution 15-0002-S25 which supports SB 591 (Pan), which will prevent kids from smoking, improve access to health care services, and help tobacco users quit.

SB 591 will improve access to health care services, tobacco prevention and cessation programs and enforcement of the laws that relate to the distribution and sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products. It will do so through a \$2 per pack tax on tobacco products, and ensures that a portion of this funding continues to be used to achieve and improve the outcomes that the Tobacco Control Program is consistently and successfully produced over the course of twenty-five years.

The burdens of smoking do not fall evenly across our state. African-American men and women have the highest smoking usage rate (21.3% and 17.1% respectively), followed by white men (17.2%) and Latino men (16%). Korean men have an unusually high tobacco usage rate at 27.9% as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender women who smoke at almost triple the rate of women in general. All this leads to an unfair burden and increased challenges for those segments of our population that are often the most vulnerable. For this reason, we must take action to reduce the harmful effects of tobacco on these and all California populations.

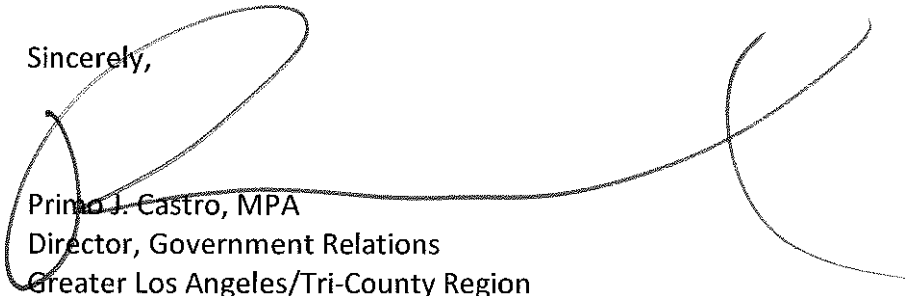
Tobacco related diseases are the leading preventable cause of death in California, claiming more than 40,000 lives each year and costing the state of California over \$13 billion in healthcare costs annually. Over \$3.5 billion are taxpayer dollars used to treat Medi-Cal patients with tobacco-related illnesses. To cover these and other government expenditures caused by smoking, the average California family's tax burden is \$745 per household.

The best way to offset these costs and protect millions of California residents is through investment in the California Tobacco Control Program, which has successfully reduced smoking rates and cigarette consumption in our state. This program, since its inception in 1989, has saved the State of California \$134 billion dollars.

It has been 16 years since California last raised its tobacco tax, and in that time we have seen our health care costs increase, and our smoking rates begin to stagnate. SB 591 would generate over \$1.5 billion in revenues that will be used to fund proven and effective tobacco prevention and cessation programs, as well as improved access to health care for low-income families. It is time to take action. It is time to protect all Californians from the harmful effects of tobacco and pass a tobacco tax.

For these reasons, we are pleased to support Resolution 15-0002-S25.

Sincerely,



Primo J. Castro, MPA
Director, Government Relations
Greater Los Angeles/Tri-County Region