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## Public areas: Extending the smoking ban would be good policy

In 2003, The Tompkins County Legislature joined other counties and passed a local law that banned smoking from restaurants, bars and other types of establishments. The measure mirrored the same law passed at the state level, but officials were fearful that the state's version would eventually be watered down. Our Legislature wanted to take a strong stance on smoking.

Now, more than four years later, the City of Ithaca is contemplating whether it should outlaw smoking in public places, including the Ithaca Commons. The Ithaca Common Council's Environment & Neighborhood Quality Committee is working with the city attorney's office to form a list of areas that could be "designated" smoke free.

We think it is a good idea. Municipalities across the country are considering, or have passed, anti-smoking legislation. If a new law protected the health and safety of even one person, it would make a smoking ban good public policy.

But we also understand there are some types of businesses who may disagree. The obvious candidates are tavern owners who have already had to deal with one round of a smoking ban. Now, the possibility of another does threaten their businesses. As the council committee moves forward, it plans on seeking the input of the Ithaca Downtown Partnership, which will have to survey its membership to see what the opinion of a ban is.

There are good reasons to place a ban on smoking on places like The Commons. Health concerns and a cleaner environment top the list. But before the city passes any law, it must solicit comment from the public and other affected parties. An unpopular ban that passes through with little comment will serve only to anger constituents. And the enforceability of any legislation must also be considered. What good is it to pass a law that will never be enforced?

We urge citizens to let Ithaca Common Council know how you feel about this issue, and hope readers will share their views on our Opinion page. Let us know how you feel about a smoking ban

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by writing a letter to the editor, and we'll publish the letters throughout January and the time council considers the new law.

Originally published December 26, 2007

**STORYCHAT** 

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stevhartwell said "Yet the world's entire news mediae and journalists is refusing to report all sides of the second hand tobacco smoke issue. They are knowingly and deliberately refusing to report that there are many researchers, scientists, even doctors and politicians, and millions of tax paying voters who do NOT believe the anti-smoking claims about second hand tobacco smoke."

As do you, since you DO NOT name any researchers, scientists, or doctors "who do NOT believe the anti-smoking claims about second hand tobacco smoke."

GOT PROOF?

In any case, whether it's proven unhealthy or not, non-smokers shouldn't have to breathe smoke.

Posted: Thu Dec 27, 2007 7:39 am

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The Global News Industry has a Fiduciary Duty to the public to report all the sides and information.

Yet the world's entire news mediae and journalists is refusing to report all sides of the second hand tobacco smoke issue.

They are knowingly and deliberately refusing to report that there are many researchers, scientists, even doctors and politicians, and millions of tax paying voters who do NOT believe the anti-smoking claims about second hand tobacco smoke.

And, by not reporting that information, the news industry deliberately and knowingly violates it's Fiduciary Duty to the public.

Some day, there will be an accounting for this deliberate act of suppression of information.

Steve Hartwell  
Toronto, Canada  
[www.reducedriskcigarettes.ca](http://www.reducedriskcigarettes.ca)

Posted: Thu Dec 27, 2007 1:16 am

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Info said: "Five of us were raised with both of our grand parents filling our house full of smoke. None of us ever had any health problems from that. I haven't seen any real proof that second hand smoke is harmful; there is no real proof! I can just see the hunt now, of police chasing people around that are holding on to cigarettes. Isn't the harassment over pot smoking enough as things are already?"

You don't have a right to pollute the air others breathe.

Posted: Wed Dec 26, 2007 11:16 pm

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I haven't seen any real proof that second hand smoke is harmful; there is no real proof!

I can just see the hunt now, of police chasing people around that are holding on to cigarettes.

Isn't the harassment over pot smoking enough as things are already?

Posted: Wed Dec 26, 2007 6:55 pm

Does this mean no pot smoking at Grassroots?

Posted: Wed Dec 26, 2007 2:18 pm

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