

Re: Ord 20-37. Creating Chapter 194 of the Legislative Code entitled Smoking Policy Disclosure to require the completion of a smoking sale disclosure report for sale of units within a common interest community

December 14, 2020

Members of the St. Paul City Council
City Hall
15 West Kellogg Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55102

Council members:

Thank you for considering adoption of an ordinance to require Smoking Policy Disclosure at the time of sale in common interest communities (CIC).

My name is Martha Hewett and I am formerly the Director of Research (now retired) at the Center for Energy Environment, where our work focused on energy efficiency and indoor air quality. I strongly support the proposed ordinance based on our past research on secondhand smoke (SHS) transfer between units in multiunit housing.

Residents of multiunit housing frequently report incursions of secondhand smoke from other units in the building. In Minnesota, our survey of 600 such households found that nearly half report SHS incursions, and 10% said that this occurs often or most of the time.¹ Our field studies using tracer gas measurements have shown that as much as 65% of the air entering a dwelling unit comes from other units in the building.² This air carries SHS constituents with it. Practically speaking, it is impossible to eliminate this air transfer: even careful air-sealing of leakage sites between units reduces it by less than one third. Thus, a person buying a condominium in a smoking-permitted building has a very real risk of involuntary exposure to SHS from neighbors, with no ability to resolve the problem through building modifications. Since there is no safe level of SHS, and since people spend a large fraction of their time at home, involuntary exposure due to SHS transfer between dwelling units is a very real health concern. Thus, it is important for people who are considering buying a unit in a CIC to know the community's smoking policy in advance of purchase. By adopting this ordinance, the Council can protect public health by ensuring that this information is made available.

Thank you very much for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

/signed/

Martha J. Hewett

¹ Hewett, MJ, SD Sandell, DJ Reece, DL Bohac 2002. Environmental tobacco smoke in rental housing – perceived problems and interest in smoke-free buildings. *Proceedings: Indoor Air*.

² Bohac, DL, MJH Hewett, SK Hammond, DT Grismrud, 2011. Secondhand smoke transfer and reductions by air sealing and ventilation in multiunit buildings: PFT and nicotine verification. *Indoor Air* 2011: 21:36-44.