

**NON-SMOKERS' RIGHTS ASSOCIATION  
OTTAWA COUNCIL ON SMOKING OR HEALTH**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**For immediate release—July 24, 2012**

**CONSERVATION CO-OP FIRST IN CANADA TO BECOME 100% SMOKE-FREE:  
MEMBERS VOTE 73% IN FAVOUR**

Ottawa, ON—Members of the democratically-controlled Conservation Co-op, located at 140 Mann Avenue in Sandy Hill, last week voted overwhelmingly in favour of becoming 100% smoke-free—a first in Canada.

The Non-Smokers' Rights Association (NSRA) and the Ottawa Council on Smoking or Health (OCSH) congratulate the Conservation Co-op, whose members voted in favour of the bylaw on July 19. The new rule, which comes into effect on January 19, 2013, will prohibit smoking in all private units of the non-profit housing complex, as well as on balconies and on the entire property. To give current residents time to adjust, three outdoor designated smoking areas will be available on the co-op's property for a period of 12 months. A cost-sharing arrangement for smokers interested in quitting and participating in a smoking cessation course has also been established.

"For more than two years a team of dedicated Conservation Co-operative members has been working on a committee here to try to protect people from the toxic air contaminant that is second-hand smoke," said Trevor Haché, chair of the committee. "We were thrilled to earn the support of 73% of members who voted at our General Members' Meeting in favour of becoming smoke-free. We look forward to our members, both young and old, being able to breathe clean air in their homes in six months time."

Ottawa Public Health and Health Canada recognize that the issue of exposure to second-hand smoke (SHS) in multi-unit housing is a serious health concern for all residents, especially infants, older adults, and those with pre-existing health conditions like asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Second-hand smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, of which 69 are known carcinogens and over 250 others are regulated toxins. Currently, one in three Ontarians resides in an apartment, condo or co-op where they are involuntarily exposed to neighbours' smoke through open windows and doors, shared walls, hallways or ventilation systems.

"We are delighted that members of the Conservation Co-op have voted in favour of a 100% smoke-free policy," says Carol McDonald, president of the OCSH. "There is no risk-free level of exposure to SHS. People spend most of their time at home, and home remains the primary place of exposure."

Ipsos Reid conducted a poll in November 2010 for Smoke-Free Housing Ontario that showed four in five Ontarians (80 per cent) living in apartments, condominiums or housing co-ops wanted to live in a smoke-free building, all other things being equal. At present, many Ontarians are not aware that no-smoking policies are legal and enforceable in rental properties, condos and housing co-ops.

"There is clearly strong demand for smoke-free apartments in Ottawa," says Pippa Beck, policy analyst with the NSRA. "Complaints about smoke in apartments and condos are by far the number one reason why people contact our organization. A no-smoking policy is a win-win situation: residents get protection from SHS at home and housing providers realize savings through less cleaning and maintenance."

The City of Ottawa's document, *"Let's Clear the Air: A Renewed Strategy for a Smoke-Free Ottawa,"* identifies encouraging and working with landlords and community housing organizations, among others, to adopt or expand on smoke-free policies.<sup>i</sup> A smoke-free bylaw does not prevent people who smoke from buying or renting accommodations, nor does it force residents to quit.

The Conservation Co-op's decision is part of a wider trend towards smoke-free housing. The Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation designated its new housing development, Beaver Barracks, 100% smoke-free when it opened its doors to tenants in December 2010. Domicile Developments has also responded to the demand and is currently building three 100% smoke-free condominiums in Ottawa. Having recently launched two smoke-free pilot sites, Ottawa Community Housing has started a consultation process towards the goal of offering some smoke-free housing options to its residents.

The 84-unit Conservation Co-op located in downtown Ottawa is an example of a "green" multi-unit building.<sup>ii</sup> It offers its members backyard garden plots, feeds electricity into the grid with rooftop solar panels, and was built to very high energy efficiency standards in 1995. The Co-op also collects rain water in a cistern, has a large underground parking lot for bicycles, and its members also adhere to an Environmental Code of Practice that limits their use of toxic cleaning products and requires them to recycle and compost.

The NSRA ([www.nsra-adnf.ca](http://www.nsra-adnf.ca)) is a non-profit public health organization that has worked exclusively in the field of tobacco control for over 35 years. Its mission is to promote public health by eliminating illness and death caused by tobacco, including second-hand smoke.

The OCSH ([www.smokefreeottawa.com](http://www.smokefreeottawa.com)) is a local volunteer-led organization. Since 1978 it has worked to create more smoke-free environments, prevent youth from starting to smoke, encourage smokers to quit, advocate for more smoking cessation resources and create a social environment where non-smoking is the norm.

For more information on smoke-free housing, visit: <http://www.smokefreehousingon.ca/sfho/>.

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<sup>i</sup> City of Ottawa. "Let's Clear the Air: A Renewed Strategy for a Smoke-Free Ottawa." Ottawa Public Health. February 6, 2012. [www.ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/obh/2012/02-06/Smoke\\_free\\_Ottawa\\_EN.htm](http://www.ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/obh/2012/02-06/Smoke_free_Ottawa_EN.htm).

<sup>ii</sup> For more information about the Conservation Co-op's many "green" features, see: [www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/afhoce/tore/afhoid/cote/buenefho/buenefho\\_005.cfm](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/afhoce/tore/afhoid/cote/buenefho/buenefho_005.cfm).