



February 17, 2012

Re: Please vote in favour of a Renewed Strategy for a Smoke-Free Ottawa

Dear Mayor Jim Watson and Members of Ottawa City Council:

On behalf of the members and community volunteers of the Ottawa Council on Smoking and Health, I urge you to vote in favour of a strengthened smoke-free bylaw on Wednesday, February 22nd.

We ask that you:

- Vote for 100% smoke-free patios, parks, beaches, sports fields, events, festivals and fruit/vegetable markets in order to protect children, hospitality workers and the public
- Ban the smoking of waterpipes in outdoor spaces and in restaurants and bars covered under Ottawa's smoke-free bylaws
- Create a level playing field for all businesses
- Work with the National Capital Commission to ensure that all outdoor events in Ottawa are 100% smoke-free
- Support more smoking cessation programs
- Support a warning phase beginning April 2, 2012 and a charging phase beginning July 2, 2012

The OCSH was very pleased that the Ottawa Board of Health and the Community and Protective Services Committee unanimously endorsed Ottawa Public Health's ***Renewed Strategy for a Smoke-Free Ottawa***.

Ottawa City Council is accountable to the residents of Ottawa. It has a duty to promote the health of its citizens and to support decisions made by the Ottawa Board of Health and the Community and Protective Services Committee.

Ottawa residents to continue to pay a high price for smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke:

- **\$3,396**: Total *annual* cost to employers for each Canadian employee who smokes, due to higher absenteeism, decreased productivity and higher insurance premiums.ⁱ
- Smoking costs Ontarians **\$4.4 billion per year** in lost productivity and **\$1.6 billion** in health care costs for a total of **\$6 billion**.ⁱⁱ
- Cost of hospitalizations for smoking-related illnesses in Ottawa: **\$40 million per year**.ⁱⁱⁱ

Ten years ago, Ottawa City Council unanimously passed the Smoke-Free Ottawa bylaw.

Let's repeat history! We urge you to maintain your reputation as strong supporters of tobacco control measures and vote unanimously in support of a Renewed Strategy for a Smoke-Free Ottawa!

Sincerely,

Suzanne Friedlaender
President
Ottawa Council on Smoking and Health
www.smokefreeottawa.com

ⁱ Conference Board of Canada. *Smoking and the Bottom Line: Updating the Costs of Smoking in the Workplace*. August 2006.
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/819903ea-6cab-46fd-ab2a-a5fb79e92e9d/006-07%20Smoking%20and%20the%20Bottom%20Line-Briefing.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. *Tobacco Legislation Facts and Myths*. <http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/en/smoke-free/legislation/clearing-air.asp>

ⁱⁱⁱ Ottawa Public Health. *Renewed Strategy for a Smoke-Free Ottawa*. Report to the Ottawa Board of Health. February 6, 2012, p. 4.