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April 29, 2013

To: Rep. Greenlick, Chair; Rep. Keny-Guyer & Rep. Thompson, Vice-Chairs
Members of the House Health Care Committee

From: Colleen Hermann-Franzen, Advocacy & Communications Manager
Re: SB 444 A, Relating to smoking in a motor vehicle when minor present

On behalf of the American Lung Association of the Mountain Pacific, serving Oregon, we would like to share our support of Senate Bill 444. We thank Senator Steiner Hayward for her leadership in furthering our mission of saving lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. We also want to thank the committee for their previous effects to protect children's health and see Senate Bill 444 A as a continuation of this important work.

Children, especially the very young who are strapped into car seats, have little control over their environment when adults smoke in a car. Unfortunately it is an all-too-common experience, as we've heard in today's testimony from Kylie Menagh-Johnson, Senator Steiner Hayward and Representative Thompson. A 2012 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found over one-fifth of children in grades 6-12 (non-smokers) are exposed to secondhand smoke in cars.[i]

Infants and young children are especially vulnerable to the toxins in secondhand smoke, because their bodies are developing. For example, eighty percent of lung development occurs after birth.[ii] The vulnerability of children to secondhand smoke is intensified by the uniquely toxic environment in the small, enclosed space of a car. **Secondhand smoke in cars can be up to *27 times* more concentrated than in a smoker's home**.[iii]

As we saw in the video, by the time it takes to smoke half a cigarette, the air quality in a parked car can reach up to *10 times the hazardous level* on the EPA's Air Quality Index.[iv] As shown in the air quality chart submitted with my testimony, on a hazardous level day, the EPA issues warnings to everyone, including healthy individuals, to stay inside or risk serious health effects. Whether the car is moving or parked, the windows opened or closed, the air quality level remains above the hazardous zone, with smoke often pooling in the back seat.

We know that the best results occur when we combine community education and laws. For the past two years, the American Lung Association in Oregon has actively reached out to parents and other adults about the serious impacts smoking in a car can have on children's health. We have attended community health fairs, published articles in local parenting magazines and shared thousands of educational materials with health departments, Head Starts, and other Oregon agencies serving children. Most recently, we have reached out to Oregon's Department of Motor Vehicles to discuss how we might be able to include smoking in cars information in their public education materials.

We believe we have raised Oregonians' awareness about smoking in cars through these educational efforts. We also know that these efforts only go so far—that's why the American Lung Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics have concluded that public policies are needed to protect nonsmokers, especially children, from secondhand smoke in cars.
Other motor vehicle laws designed to protect the health of children (seatbelt requirements, proper use of infant and child car seats) have been proven effective. **After legislators passed Oregon's child car seat legislation, drivers increased their proper usage from 30 percent to over 80 percent.**[v]

Let's work to protect our children from secondhand smoke in vehicles and pass Senate Bill 444 A. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

With Highest Regards,
Colleen Hermann-Franzen

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[i] King, Brian, et al. Secondhand Smoke Exposure in Cars Among Middle and High School Students—United States, 2000-2009. American Academy of Pediatrics, March 2012; 129(3).
[ii] Dietert RR, et al. Workshop to identify critical windows of exposure for children's health: immune and respiratory systems work group summary. Environmental Health Perspectives, June 2000; 108(Suppl 3):483-90.
[iii] California Environmental Protection Agency, California Air Resources Board, Proposed Identification of Environmental Tobacco Smoke as a Toxic Air Contaminant (2005), available at: http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/ets/vehicle_ets.htm (visited 9/19/11).
[iv] Video: *Smoke-free Cars with Kids: A Scientific Demonstration of Secondhand Smoke Exposure*, produced by the California Tobacco Control Program, 2008, available at: http://vimeo.com/1513382 (visited 2/20/13)
[v] Interventions for promoting booster seat use in four to eight year olds travelling in motor vehicles (Review), available at: http://www.thecochranelibrary.com/userfiles/ccoch/file/Safety_on_the_road/CD004334.pdf (visited 2/20/13)

Air Quality Index (AQI) - A Guide to Air Quality and Your Health

The AQI is an index for reporting daily air quality. It tells you how clean or polluted your air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you. Think of the AQI as a yardstick that runs from 0 to 500. The higher the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution and the greater the health concern. For example, an AQI value of 50 represents good air quality with little potential to affect public health, while an AQI value over 300 represents hazardous air quality.

Air Quality Index (AQI) Values	Levels of Health Concern	Colors
When the AQI is in this range:	***..air quality conditions are:***	***...as symbolized by this color:***
0-50	**Good**	**Green**
51-100	**Moderate**	**Yellow**
101-150	**Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups**	**Orange**
151 to 200	**Unhealthy**	**Red**
201 to 300	**Very Unhealthy**	**Purple**
301 to 500	**Hazardous**	**Maroon**

Each category corresponds to a different level of health concern. The six levels of health concern and what they mean are:

- **"Good"** AQI is 0 - 50. Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
- **"Moderate"** AQI is 51 - 100. Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people. For example, people who are unusually sensitive to ozone may experience respiratory symptoms.
- **"Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups"** AQI is 101 - 150. Although general public is not likely to be affected at this AQI range, people with lung disease, older adults and children are at a greater risk from exposure to ozone, whereas persons with heart and lung disease, older adults and children are at greater risk from the presence of particles in the air.
- **"Unhealthy"** AQI is 151 - 200. Everyone may begin to experience some adverse health effects, and members of the sensitive groups may experience more serious effects.
- **"Very Unhealthy"** AQI is 201 - 300. This would trigger a health alert signifying that the entire population is more likely to be affected.
- **"Hazardous"** AQI is greater than 300. This would trigger a health warning of emergency conditions. Everyone may experience more serious health effects.

Source: http://airnow.gov/index.cfm?action=aqibasics.aqi

Chart from *Smoke-free Cars with Kids: A Scientific Demonstration of Secondhand Smoke Exposure* video, Provided by Neil Klepeis, Ph.D., Human Exposure & Environmental Health Scientist