



March 3, 2020

House Transportation and Policy Division

RE: HF 3072 (clean air for kids in cars)

Dear Chair Hornstein and Committee Members:

I am the Chief Executive Officer of ClearWay Minnesota, an independent nonprofit organization that works to reduce tobacco's harm in our state. I am writing to urge you to support **HF 3072**, which prohibits smoking and e-cigarette use in cars when kids are present.

In 2006, the U.S. Surgeon General stated definitively that there is no level of safe secondhand smoke exposure. There is a mountain of research showing that secondhand smoke causes heart disease, cancer and other illnesses, including many that affect children.

Reducing exposure to secondhand smoke is one of our state's greatest – and most popular – public health achievements. The Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act is one of the most comprehensive in the nation. Thanks to your support, we strengthened that law last year by adding e-cigarettes.

Our statewide smoke-free law, which passed in 2007, had a positive ripple effect that extended from public spaces to people's personal lives. When the law passed and our restaurants and bars went smoke-free, calls to QUITPLAN Services® and other quit-smoking helplines rose dramatically. The percentage of smoke-free homes also significantly increased. In 2007, 83 percent of Minnesotans didn't allow smoking in their homes, and less than half of smokers kept their houses smoke-free. Today, 92 percent of Minnesota homes are completely smoke-free, including 66 percent of smokers' homes.

Children exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to have bronchitis, pneumonia, chronic coughs, ear infections and reduced lung function. ClearWay Minnesota-funded research found that air quality in vehicles where a smoker is present is extremely hazardous, and secondhand smoke remains present even with a car's windows and car vents completely open. In fact, average secondhand smoke exposure in a car is equivalent to sitting for three hours in a smoky bar. Despite these risks, nearly one in four Minnesota kids said they had ridden in a smoky car in the past week.

This bill also sends a strong message that we care about the health of our kids at a time when they are facing an epidemic of e-cigarette use. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state that aerosol from e-cigarettes is not safe and contains nicotine, heavy metals, formaldehyde and other carcinogens and harmful chemicals. To make matters worse, there have been no long-term studies conducted on e-cigarettes, so the long-term impact on the health of users or those exposed to secondhand aerosol is unknown.

This bill will ensure our kids are protected from dangerous secondhand smoke and e-cigarette aerosol. It extends our state's clean air protections to cars, so no child will have to suffer the health effects of secondhand smoke. I urge you to support this bill (HF3072) to ensure a healthier future for kids and our entire state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David J. Willoughby".

David J. Willoughby, M.A.
Chief Executive Officer
ClearWay MinnesotaSM