

Supervisors vote to ban e-cigs in public places

By **Anne Ternus-Bellamy** From page A1 | October 01, 2015

WOODLAND — Yolo County supervisors on Tuesday voted to ban the use of e-cigarettes in most public places, following in the footsteps of the cities of Davis and Woodland, which already have done so.

Supervisors voted 4-1 in favor of an ordinance that would prohibit the use of electronic nicotine delivery devices in places where state law prohibits the use of traditional cigarettes, including workplaces, restaurants and bars. All unincorporated areas of the county would be covered by the ban.

The ordinance will return to the board for a second vote later this month and additional restrictions on e-cigarettes may be on the horizon as well.

Both county supervisors from Davis, Jim Provenza and Don Saylor, previously expressed support for additional restrictions on how e-cigarettes are marketed and where they can be sold.

Their comments came following a presentation in July by Steven Jensen of the county's Health and Human Services Agency, who said Yolo County is sliding backwards in the fight against smoking.

“Unfortunately, we are beginning to lose ground and the reason we are losing ground is because of the introduction of this new technology called electronic cigarettes,” Jensen said.

The youth smoking rate in Yolo County — once the lowest in the state — Jensen said, “has gone up threefold since the introduction of electronic cigarettes.”

“And the majority of these users ... have never even tried traditional cigarettes,” he added. “They’re just jumping straight to electronic cigarette sampling.”

The reason why, he said, lies in the products themselves, and the way they are marketed to youths through the use of flavoring.

“Most of the flavors are sweet,” Jensen said. “They are strawberry- and blueberry-flavored, caramel flavors that have pictures of ice cream sundaes on them.”

“What we know is that the adults who smoke are not using electronic cigarettes because adults don’t go for these flavors. The youth and the young adults — 18 to 24 years old — are the ones attracted to those flavors.”

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration banned candy- and fruit-flavored cigarettes back in 2009 specifically because of their appeal to youths. Several local jurisdictions have since extended that ban to all tobacco products, including Santa Clara County and the city of Hayward, Jensen said.

Saylor and Provenza indicated some willingness to go that far in Yolo County as well.

“I’m most concerned about the marketing to children,” Provenza said in July. “We’re not talking about somebody who smokes cigarettes and then shifts to e-cigarettes. ... We’re talking about somebody who potentially might never smoke.

“I personally would favor this and the most restrictive ordinance that we could write consistent with the law,” Provenza added.

Saylor said he, too, would be interested in “some sort of regulation on the marketing and sale of flavored tobacco products.”

Provenza reiterated his interest in such a move on Tuesday and Jensen said a list of possible actions is being compiled and would be brought back to supervisors to consider.

Even without such a ban, Jensen said including e-cigarettes in the county’s existing anti-smoking regulations would serve two purposes — protecting more people from secondhand vapor and sending a message, especially to young people, that the products are not safe.

“Secondhand vaping ... does exist,” Jensen said. “In actuality, the vapor is an aerosol and it does contain some of the same chemicals that are released when traditional cigarettes are heated and inhaled and blown out.”

At least 10 chemicals known to cause cancer or birth defects — and which are listed under Proposition 65 — are contained in e-cigarettes, Jensen said, “and these are just the beginnings of what studies are showing.”

The possible danger of secondhand vapor is what prompted supervisors to ban the use of electronic nicotine delivery devices in and around county-owned buildings and vehicles last year. Then, as was the case on Tuesday, the vote was 4-1 with Supervisor Matt Rexroad of Woodland dissenting.

Under the Yolo County ordinance, the use of e-cigarettes will be prohibited in all enclosed public places and places of employment where smoking of traditional cigarettes is currently prohibited under state law.

That includes buses, retail stores, restaurants, bars, public meetings rooms, educational facilities and health facilities. Workplace areas would include offices, lobbies, waiting rooms, break rooms, bathrooms and elevators

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