



# City Council To Consider E-Cigarette Ban

## Ban Would Prohibit Use Of E-Cigarettes In Public Places

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**NEW YORK (CBSNewYork)** — Electronic cigarettes are more popular than ever, on Wednesday, a New York City Council committee held a hearing on a proposal to ban [the devices](#) in anywhere smoking of real cigarettes is not allowed.

The ban would prohibit the use of [e-cigarettes](#) in restaurants, offices, parks and other public places, much like actual cigarettes.

As CBS 2's Sonia Rincon reported Wednesday, e-cigarettes are tar-free and do not contain tobacco. But the question of whether they are really safe is in dispute.

"We do know that the e-cigarettes do put out some chemicals. We do know they put out some fine particles," said city Health Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley. "But the effects on health are just unknown."

But Dr. Gilbert Ross disagrees with that assertion.

"Dr. Farley said numerous times 'we don't know what's in the vapor, we don't know what's in these things.' We sure do know what's in the vapor and nothing harmful is in the vapor," he told the committee. "E-cigarettes seem to be a potential public health miracle."

Lucy Papova, a researcher on the subject, discussed some findings before the committee that contradicted those claims.

"E-cigarettes emissions contain harmful chemicals such as formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, acetone and others," she said.

So are the mystery vapors bothering people enough to be banned anywhere that smoking is forbidden?

“It’s not bothersome to me at all,” said nonsmoker Evan Williams. “I kind of disagree with the ban.”

“It’s a little bit annoying,” added Anna Fernandez. “But to each his own. I’m a nonsmoker, so I’m not for any kind of smoking whatsoever.”

But e-cigarette users said the use of their product does not constitute smoking. They say they are “vaping,” and quitting real cigarettes.

“This is the first time in my life that I’ve found something that actually allowed me to abstain from analog cigarettes,” said e-cigarette user Ilona Orshansky. “And at this point, they actually disgust me.”

“To force people outside among second-hand smoke is preposterous,” added Jay Reissberg.

E-cigarette vapers puffed away right in City Council Chambers as the councilmembers heard the arguments. The act did not sit well with some in the chamber.

“I thought it was outrageous and very disrespectful,” said Councilman James Gennaro (D-24th.) “If they think by coming and blowing smoke in the council’s face that it’s going to be sympathetic to their position, they guessed wrong.”

The American Lung Association also voiced its disapproval of electronic cigarettes at the hearing.

“We do not need to get to the place where we’re replacing secondhand smoke with secondhand e-cigarette emissions,” said Michael Seilback of the association.

Supporters of the ban also said it is better to crack down on e-cigarettes now, before more people get hooked on them.

“It’s very popular now. A lot of people buy the disposable ones; some rechargeable,” said vendor Harry Patel, who added that young people are the most frequent buyers.

In fact, some high schoolers from Staten Island said they have been seeing teens using e-cigarettes and real cigarettes interchangeably.

“How can you think that something you can smoke anywhere will help you,

when you go back to smoking cigarettes one day?” said John Lasorsa of Tottenville High School. “You’ll need to eventually, just to smoke a cigarette who you don’t have an e-cigarette. You’ll want to smoke inside. You’ll want to smoke around your kids again.”

If e-cigarettes are banned like regular cigarettes, the city Department of Health and Mental Hygiene said it would give businesses and restaurants a year to put up signs indicating there is no smoking or vaping allowed.

<http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2013/12/04/city-council-to-consider-e-cigarette-ban/>