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Lawmakers Consider Smoking Ban for Beaches, Boardwalks

4-9-14 **By Lauren Wanko**, *Correspondent*

(Video clip online at <http://www.njtvonline.org/news/video/lawmakers-consider-smoking-ban-for-beaches-boardwalks/>)

Langosta Lounge owner Marilyn Schlossbach combs through her planters for cigarette butts every day, and she's fed up with it.

"These cigarettes do affect other things. They affect wildlife, they affect your drinking water, a bigger picture that people don't think of when they flick it on a planter," Schlossbach said.

That's why the Jersey Shore restaurateur supports a smoking ban on all New Jersey beaches, boardwalks and state parks.

Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle sponsored the measure, which already passed in the Assembly.

"It's a good public health policy. Most people don't enjoy inhaling and second-hand smoke and when it comes to the environment people do not appreciate seeing the litter," Huttle said.

The measure's an extension of the New Jersey Smoke-Free Act, which prohibits smoking and the use of electronic smoking devices in indoor public places in the state, with a few exceptions like casinos. Smoking is also prohibited inside schools and on school grounds.

"You can't smoke at most public venues. The beach is a public venue. We want to make it clean and healthy for middle class families to come and enjoy," said Belmar Mayor Matt Doherty.

Belmar officials are crafting an ordinance which would prohibit smoking on their beaches and boardwalks starting Memorial Day.

Two hundred twenty-three municipalities in 13 New Jersey counties already restrict smoking in their park and recreational areas.

In Bradley Beach, a smoking ban has been in effect for a few years now. Smoking is prohibited on the beach and the boardwalk throughout most of the day, except for very early in the morning and late at night.

Not all beach-goers agree with the proposed ban.

“I think it’s taking it a little too far. As long as smokers are responsible with their cigarette butts and stuff like not standing down wind of people I think there’s nothing wrong with it,” said Chris Delany.

“This is free public place outside, all the fresh air in the world,” said Willy Tucker of Asbury Park.

“A healthy Asbury Park is what we want,” said Mayor Myra Campbell.

Mayor and former smoker Campbell supports the smoking ban.

“There are far more people who quit smoking every day then there was previously. There is an awareness,” Campbell said.

Eighty-five percent of New Jersey adults don’t smoke. Still, would a smoking ban drive summer tourists away from the beach?

“They’ll still come down and sit on the beach. They’ll sneak a smoke here and there,” said Pete Hegel.

The first violation would cost \$250.

Assemblywoman Huttel hopes the Senate will pass the measure and the governor will sign the smoking ban into law in time for the summer beach season.

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Data source: Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy