

Philly.Com **Council Passes E-Cig Ban in Public Places**

Jenny DeHuff, March 28, 2014

E-DICULOUS. That's what vapers are calling a bill passed unanimously by City Council yesterday that adds e-cigarettes to Philly's existing ban on smoking.

Council also approved a sister measure that bans the sale of e-cigs to minors.

Councilman Bill Greenlee's proposal to regulate the product has been under fire for several weeks from advocates of e-cigs who've said the little electric invention has been a godsend.

Greg Conley, a volunteer with the nonprofit research group National Vapers Club and an e-cigarette lobbyist, said e-cigs weaned him off smoking for good and probably saved his life.

Conley was one of five who spoke out in white-hot opposition to the bill yesterday in Council chambers. He pulled an e-cig from his jacket pocket and took a puff.

"Not a single study has ever found any harmful level of any chemical produced by the vapor of an electronic cigarette," he said. "This bill is misguided moralism."

Greenlee argued the same point. He said there have been no studies conducted that show solid evidence of the direct or secondhand effects of e-cigs, and therefore more time is needed to do that work.

"Electronic cigarettes are a totally unregulated product," Greenlee said.

"We're proposing reasonable regulations - not a ban - to protect the health of the community. These tobacco companies produce a lot of electronic cigarettes - they market them. For decades, tobacco companies lie, lie, lie to the public about the effects of cigarettes - about the effects of secondhand smoke. But now they're saying, 'Trust us, this product is safe.' I'm sorry, but I don't."

Critics argue the measure would be impossible to enforce if Mayor Nutter signs it into law. It would mean the puffing of e-cigs will not be allowed in bars, restaurants and workplaces.

Philadelphia now joins New York, Los Angeles and Chicago in passing similar regulations.

In other action, Council unanimously approved a series of bills allowing for the extension of the SEPTA Center City concourse underground to help lay the foundation for the construction of the new Comcast tower at 18th and Arch streets.

The ordinance authorizes Liberty Property Trust, the builders of the proposed Comcast Innovation and Technology Center, to extend the underground pedestrian tunnel below the Comcast Center from 17th Street westward to 18th.

http://www.philly.com/philly/news/politics/20140328_Council_passes_e-cig_ban_in_public_places.html