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## **BILL WOULD BAN SMOKING AT PARKS & BEACHES**

*By Phil Gregory, WBGO News Trenton. February 20, 2014*

An Assembly committee has advanced legislation that would ban smoking at public parks and beaches in New Jersey.

Cara Murphy is with the Summit-based group GASP, Global Advisors On Smoke Free Policy. She says even in outdoor areas, second-hand smoke can be harmful.

“Smoke-free air benefits everyone. It not only benefits tourism as people are able to go to smoke-free beaches, but it also benefits children who wants to use parks and recreation areas, and it also benefits anyone who wants to quit using tobacco because you’re no longer around the presence of tobacco.”

Cindy Meakem works at the Center for Prevention and Counseling in Newton. She also believes a ban on smoking in public parks would help protect children.

“Children see people smoking in parks and then they say that’s it’s okay to smoke so it’s giving mixed messages. I grew up with smokers. Both of my parents died from smoking.”

New Jersey Sierra Club Sierra Club director Jeff Tittle says it’s not just about the dangers of second-hand smoke.

“Cigarette butts are one of the major sources of litter in our parks and on our beaches impacting visitors experiences, causing pollution. There’s also a safety issue on a beach in particular, people stepping on partially put out cigarettes and getting injured.”

A similar bill was introduced in the previous legislative session, but it failed to win approval.

Assembly sponsor Valerie Huttie is hoping the latest version becomes law by the time people go back to the beaches this summer.

<http://www.wbgo.org/newsarticle/bill-would-ban-smoking-at-parks-beaches>