

RESOLUTION NO. 11740-08

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING ACTION FROM THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
IN REGARD TO SMOKE-FREE INDOOR AIR LEGISLATION.

WHEREAS, secondhand smoke kills at least 35,000 non-smokers nationally and approximately 1,000 in Virginia each year; and

WHEREAS, a 2006 report by the U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that secondhand smoke exposure causes disease and premature death in children and adults who do not smoke and that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke; and

WHEREAS, designated smoking sections do not eliminate nonsmokers' exposure to secondhand smoke nor protect the employees of these establishments; and

WHEREAS, a 2006 air quality study found that air pollution in smoky restaurants, bars, bingo halls and bowling alleys was five times worse on average than air pollution found in the Hampton Roads Tunnel; and

WHEREAS, a 2008 Mellman Group poll indicated an overwhelming majority of Virginia voters (75%) support a law prohibiting smoking inside all workplaces, offices, bars and restaurants. In the same poll, 88% of voters agreed that all workers in Virginia should be protected from exposure to secondhand smoke in the workplace, including 75% of voters who strongly agreed; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Surgeon General, the only way to fully protect employees and the public from the hazards of secondhand smoke is to create smoke-free environments; and

WHEREAS, smoke-free air regulations are public health issues; and

WHEREAS, local and state governments throughout the country have successfully passed smoke-free air laws to protect people against the harmful effects of secondhand smoke; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Newport News, Virginia, desires to protect the health, comfort and working environment of its residents and employees as they may be affected by smoking in various public places in the City; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia has neither passed statewide smoke-free legislation nor provided Virginia localities the legal authority through legislation to pass local smoke-free policies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Newport News, Virginia:

1. That it endorses the enactment of smoke-free air legislation that will restrict smoking in all public indoor environments and workplaces, thereby, protecting all Virginians from further health risks.

2. Or, in the alternative, endorses the enactment of legislation which would empower this locality to enact a smoke-free air ordinance at the local level.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS ON  
NOVEMBER 25, 2008

Mabel V. Washington, CMC  
City Clerk

Joe S. Frank  
Mayor

A true copy, teste:

City Clerk