



COALITION FOR A TOBACCO FREE VERMONT

2015 Legislative Agenda

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PRIORITIES

Ensure continued progress in the reduction of tobacco use in Vermont by:

- Advocating for effective tobacco tax policies that will reduce and prevent smoking.
- Supporting strong clean indoor air laws that prevent exposure to secondhand smoke from tobacco products and aerosol from unregulated tobacco substitutes such as e-cigarettes.
- Increasing and preserving the Tobacco Trust Fund to sustain the Tobacco Control Program.

Advocating for Effective Tax Policies

Substantially raising the tax on tobacco products is the single most effective way to prevent youth from smoking. Coupled with a strong tobacco control program, it is also one of the best ways to help smokers quit. The Coalition urges lawmakers to:

- **Increase the cigarette tax by \$1.25 per pack**, raising the tax to \$4.00 per pack and preventing 2,400 kids from becoming smokers.
- **Increase the tax rate on other tobacco products to ensure the price of smokeless tobacco products parallels the price of cigarettes**, ensuring that youth and adults do not use these products as a cheaper alternative to cigarettes.
- **Dedicate a percentage of tax receipts to the Tobacco Control Program**, ensuring a sustainable source of funding for tobacco prevention and control efforts.

Supporting Strong Clean Indoor Air Laws

Strong clean indoor air laws are the most effective way to prevent secondhand smoke exposure. In addition to conventional tobacco products, exposure to aerosol from unregulated electronic cigarettes presents a potential threat to public health while normalizing smoking behavior. The Coalition urges lawmakers to:

- **Include tobacco substitutes in current clean indoor air laws**, ensuring that electronic cigarettes are not used in any place of business that is accessible to the public.

Increasing and Preserving the Tobacco Trust Fund

The Tobacco Trust Fund was established in FY2001 to provide a long-term, sustainable funding source for the Tobacco Control Program. Unfortunately, the legislature has appropriated millions of dollars from the trust fund to pay for other programs and fill budget holes – resulting in a projected \$0 balance in the FY2015 budget. The State has also relied on the MSA Strategic Contribution Fund, a ten-year increase in payments, (\$10-14 million/year) due to end in FY2017 with no planning for the loss of revenue. We urge lawmakers to:

- **Ensure that any payments to the State that have been withheld by the tobacco industry be deposited into the Trust Fund.**
- **Review the appropriation of MSA dollars and consider other funding options for programs that do not address tobacco use while ensuring that MSA dollars are not oversubscribed.**
- **Consider additional funding options for the Tobacco Control Program such as a percentage of the cigarette tax.**