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September 26, 2008

Honourable Mary Polak
Minister for Healthy Living and Sport
Room 325 Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Polak:

Subject: Amendment to the *Tobacco Control Act* to Create a Consistent Legislative Framework on Smoking Laws

On behalf of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of B.C. and Yukon and the BC Lung Association, which make up the Clean Air Coalition of B.C., we are writing to urge the province to amend the *Tobacco Control Act* to set up a more stringent and consistent legislative framework on smoke-free laws.

We applaud the government's recent amendments to the *Tobacco Control Act* implemented in the fall of 2007 and the spring of 2008 which strengthened smoke-free regulations, however the regulations do not go far enough and are causing challenges for municipalities and British Columbians.

During the consultation process, we recommended stronger regulations based on scientific evidence in peer reviewed reports. Some municipalities are agreeing with our position and are implementing tough smoke-free bylaws based on this information. These municipalities, which have either already implemented their own bylaws or have approved bylaws for a future implementation date, include the City of Vancouver, the City of Richmond, the City of Surrey, the City of White Rock and the Capital Regional District.

As a former community activist and school board representative, you may appreciate that there now exists a patchwork of smoke-free regulations and bylaws across the province which creates confusion among the public, both in terms of the laws themselves and who is responsible for their enforcement.

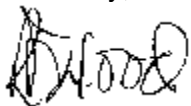
We recommend that the province make further amendments to the *Tobacco Control Act* to reflect the tough stance that municipalities are taking to protect the public. These amendments include:

- Increasing the buffer zone around doorways, windows, patios and air intakes from the existing 3 metres to 7.5 metres.
- Banning smoking on outdoor patios where food or alcohol is served.
- Banning smoking in taxicabs.
- Extending the age from 16 to 19 in the regulation where no smoking is allowed in vehicles where children are present.


These measures will not only create a more consistent framework more easily understandable by the public, but will also make enforcement easier and will better protect the public from the health hazards of second-hand smoke, an important goal in light of the province's target of being the healthiest jurisdiction ever to hold an Olympic Games.

We would be pleased to discuss this issue with you further and encourage you to contact our Director, Mr. Jack Boomer at 250-721-4268 or jackboomer@shaw.ca.

Sincerely,



R.F. Bobbe Wood, MA
President & CEO
Heart and Stroke Foundation
of B.C. & Yukon



Scott McDonald
Executive Director
BC Lung Association

cc. Honourable George Abbott, Minister of Health
Jack Boomer, Director, Clean Air Coalition of B.C.