

## THE SMOKING QUESTION

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Byline:

Central Station Pub owner Craig Hill said he doesn't promote smoking. He quit the habit last year. If he hadn't installed a smoking room, though, he said "I may not be here now."

Hill is talking about the survival of his business.

In 2002, the Workers' Compensation Board asked for a provincewide ban on smoking in the workplace and public spaces.

The hospitality industry objected and the B.C. labour minister overturned the proposed regulation.

The designated smoking room (DRS) was created as an alternative.

Today, the Enough campaign is pushing for a ban on DSRs for good.

Enough is supported by the Clean Air Coalition of B.C., composed of the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the B.C. Lung Association.

"It's time for B.C. to step up to the plate," said Jack Boomer, director of the Clean Air Coalition.

Since the regulation was overturned in B.C., several provinces have issued smoke-free legislation.

"At a time when the premier is saying he wants to make B.C. the healthiest jurisdiction to host the Olympics, it's inconceivable how he can permit workers to be poisoned from secondhand smoke," said Boomer.

Hill said it would be nice to regulate smoking to outside only, but right now his downtown Kamloops business depends on the puffers.

His business took a dive after the government forced him to go smoke-free, before DSRs were permitted.

Hill said he has found his patrons simply like to smoke indoors.

"If the government really wanted to get rid of smoking, why don't we get rid of cigarettes, period," said Hill. He said he does think the regulations will change. For now, he is just looking out for his livelihood and trying to please his patrons.

"We try to keep everybody happy, but it's not easy."

Hill spent \$40,000 to \$60,000 installing two smoking rooms in his pub. A majority of pubs and restaurants in Kamloops also have designated smoking rooms.

The issue is that according to the Canadian Cancer Society, studies show that separately vented smoking rooms aren't 100 per cent effective in keeping carcinogens inside.

A recent Surgeon Generals Report released in June also said there is "no risk-free level of second-hand smoke". The report has found that even brief second-hand smoke exposure can result in immediate harm. The only solution is to ban smoking indoors.

Owner of Duffy's Pub Aurthur Dolmat said he is happy the previous owner decided against installing a smoking room. He has heard that business actually increased after the establishment became non- smoking.

Dolmat is a former smoker and said "I find it better working in a non-smoking environment."

"Customers say the food tastes better."

He said the waitresses love it. Before they were tired after their shifts and they smelled like smoke. There are definitely health benefits for his employees.

The Genuine Progress Index for Atlantic Canada found in 2002 that there is no evidence in any objective study to show that smoke free policies have a negative impact on bar, hotel and tourism revenue.

The Canadian Cancer Society said there are benefits to the DSR bans that include reduced cleaning costs and fire insurance premiums, less frequent repainting, reduced absenteeism and fewer cigarette burn marks.

Second hand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals. 1,200 of the 4,000 are known to be harmful to humans and 50 of those are carcinogens, 103 are poisonous.

The Enough campaign is riding along with the City of Merritt's Union of BC Municipalities proposed resolution to ban smoking in indoor public places and eliminate DSRs. The resolution will be discussed at the UBCM convention during Oct. 23 to 27.

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