

Senate passes fire-safe cigarette bill

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Legislation means lower risk of damaged homes and lost lives; Bill now moves to Governor's desk

The Oregon Senate today passed House Bill 2163, legislation requiring the sale of firesafe cigarettes in Oregon. The cigarettes have proven to be safer for consumers because of their ability to self-extinguish, greatly reducing the chance of fire. Use of the fire-safe cigarettes in other states has shown their effectiveness in reducing fires and preventing deaths.

Fire-safe cigarettes work by using two or three thin bands of less-porous paper in the wrapper that act as "speed bumps" to slow down a burning cigarette. A conventional cigarette will continue to burn when left unattended. But a fire-safe cigarette, left unattended, will extinguish when the burning tobacco reaches one of these speed bumps. Photo: National Institute of Standards and Technology "This is consumer protection at its best," said Senator Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene). "The result of this legislation will be fewer lives devastated by a household fire."

The legislation would require that cigarettes sold in Oregon be self-extinguishing. Fire-safe cigarettes use a different design in the wrapping paper that results in the cigarette extinguishing itself when left unattended. Regular cigarettes continue to burn when left unattended.

"It is a basic design change in the cigarette, but it makes a significant difference in protecting people and property from unintended fires," added Senator Prozanski.

"This is an important piece of legislation for protecting Oregonians," said Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham). "As a nurse, I have seen how a fire can devastate a family."

Fire-safe cigarette laws have been passed in California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont, New Jersey, Utah and most recently, Kentucky. It is also law nationwide in Canada. In the U.S., more than 700 people die annually from smoking-related residential fires.

House Bill 2163 will now move to the Governor's desk for his signature.

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