



Shaping Tomorrow's Global Built Environment Today

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M. Dennis Knight
2024-2025 ASHRAE President

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April 9, 2025

The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chair
Finance Committee
Rhode Island House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

Sent via email to: rep-abney@rilegislature.gov

Re: H. 5464, "Public Health and Workplace Safety Act"

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

I am writing on behalf of ASHRAE regarding House Bill 5464, which proposes to eliminate the smoking ban exemption for casinos and pari-mutuel facilities. ASHRAE, founded in 1894, is a global society advancing human well-being through sustainable technology for the built environment. The Society and its more than 55,000 members worldwide focus on building systems, energy efficiency, indoor air quality, refrigeration and sustainability. Through research, standards writing, publishing, certification and continuing education, ASHRAE shapes tomorrow's built environment today.

ASHRAE encourages the Committee to **support** H. 5464 and the proposed elimination of the smoking ban exemption. ASHRAE's Position Document on Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) states that with regard to indoor environments with mixed occupancy of smokers and nonsmokers, "If smoking is allowed throughout a space or a collection of spaces served by a single air handler, with no effort to isolate or separate the smokers and nonsmokers, **there is no currently available or reasonably anticipated ventilation or air cleaning system that can adequately control or significantly reduce the health risks of ETS to an acceptable level.** This situation includes unrestricted smoking in homes, dormitories, casinos, bingo parlors, small workplaces, and open plan office spaces." (*ASHRAE Position Document on Environmental Tobacco Smoke, p. 9.*)

As a technical Society developing standards for indoor environmental quality, **ASHRAE holds the position that the only means of avoiding health effects and eliminating indoor ETS exposure is**

to ban all smoking activity inside and near buildings. This position is supported by the conclusions of health authorities that any level of ETS exposure leads to adverse health effects, and therefore:

- The building and its systems can reduce only odor and discomfort but cannot eliminate exposure when smoking is allowed inside or near a building.
- Even when all practical means of separation and isolation of smoking areas are employed, adverse health effects from exposure in non-smoking spaces in the same building cannot be eliminated.
- Neither dilution ventilation, air distribution (e.g., “air curtains”) nor air cleaning should be relied upon to control ETS exposure.
- For multifamily buildings, complete smoking bans inside and near them protects nonsmoking adults and children.
- Further research is needed from cognizant health authorities on the health effects of involuntary exposure in the indoor environment from smoking cannabis, using hookahs, using electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), and engaging in other activities commonly referred to as vaping or using e-cigarettes.

Again, we urge you to **support** H. 5464 and its proposed elimination of the smoking ban exemption. I am attaching a copy of the ASHRAE Position Document on Environmental Tobacco Smoke, which more thoroughly discusses this matter. ASHRAE would be happy to address any questions you might have. Please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact GovAffairs@ashrae.org.

Sincerely,



M. Dennis Knight
2024-2025 ASHRAE President

Enclosure