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Healthy People Build Strong Communities

## Testimony on HB 2690 concerning amendments to the Kansas clean air act

Chair Brunk and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB2690. The Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD) is opposed to the provisions within HB2690 amending the Kansas Clean Air Act, specifically the exemption provided to private businesses that employ and serve individuals ages 21 and older.

The devastating health consequences of smoking are well documented. According to the Surgeon General, "Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable and premature death, killing more than 1,200 Americans every day." Furthermore, tobacco use is one of the most preventable causes of illness and death in America today. Tobacco use causes premature death to almost half a million Americans each year, and it contributes to profound disability and pain in many others. Approximately one-third of all tobacco users in this country will die prematurely because of their dependence on tobacco. Areas with a high smoking prevalence will also have greater exposure to secondhand smoke for non-smokers, which can cause or exacerbate a wide range of adverse health effects, including cancer, heart disease, respiratory infections, and asthma.<sup>i</sup>

There are clear benefits of ensuring smoke-free environments and workplaces, not the least of which is preventing exposure to second-hand smoke and the associated health effects. A 2001 study<sup>ii</sup> found that 77% of Kansas voters surveyed supported the Kansas Clean Air Act and 85% believe that having smoke-free workplaces, including bars and restaurants, is important.

The Kansas Clean Air Act is an effective public health strategy aimed at reducing the negative consequences of second-hand smoke exposure. Efforts to diminish the effectiveness of the law through exemptions provide no public benefit and create a negative impact on public health. As such, KALHD is opposed to HB2690.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions or would like to discuss in more detail, please contact Michelle Ponce, executive director at 785-271-8391.

House Federal & State Affairs

Date: 3-12-12

Attachment # 12

<sup>i</sup> Source: www.kansashealthmatters.org

<sup>ii</sup> Source: Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition



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