



Seattle Parks Superintendent Christopher Williams  
Board of Parks Commissioners Albert, Angulo, Edmiston, Kincaid, Maryman, Mehdi, Tierney, & Wright  
Seattle Parks Department  
100 Dexter Ave. N  
Seattle, WA 98109

May 7, 2015

Dear Acting Superintendent Williams and Board of Parks Commissioners:

I am writing regarding the proposed ban on smoking in our city's public parks. Our Coalition opposes this proposal, and respectfully requests that you withdraw it or decline to recommend it to the Mayor and City Council for further consideration. While seeking to improve the public health, the proponents of this ban fail to weigh the unintended and inevitable consequences which would weigh heavily on the lives of people for whom public space is their only space.

As our city and county aspire to redress racial discrimination and other deep-seated social and economic inequities, it is essential to weigh the full benefits and costs of policy proposals. The current 25' rule against smoking in proximity to other parks users seems to work quite well. In practice it seems largely sufficient to the purpose of protecting people from second-hand smoke (particularly when compared with the routine exposure to smoking that takes place on Seattle's sidewalks).

Given the enormous public health crisis that is homelessness, to create a new ordinance that would likely lead to further harassment and conflict in the daily lives of our homeless neighbors seems imbalanced, at least. Recent protestations that the proposed ban would not be robustly enforced, but would result in multiple warnings prior to fines or banishment, reinforce our sense that enforcement of this ban would serve to increase conflict between the public and police. We have seen enough differential enforcement of laws about public consumption of alcohol to know how this would play out.

**I would like to invite you to attend our Coalition's May 21 General Membership meeting** between 10.00 a.m. and 11.00 a.m. I realize that the Commissioners are all volunteers, but I hope that at least one or two might be able to join us for what we anticipate could begin an important exploration of how to ensure that our public parks are and remain accessible to all members of the public. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely ,

Alison Eisinger  
Executive Director

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**Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness** *works collaboratively to ensure safety and survival for people who are homeless, and to end the crisis of homelessness in our region.* 77 S. Washington St., Seattle, WA 98104 (206) 204.8350