

Supporting California's Master Plan for Tobacco Control

WHEREAS, since 1989, the dedicated work of California's Tobacco Control Program has resulted in the second lowest adult and youth smoking rates in the country. Lung cancer is also declining in California nearly four times faster than the rest of the nation. California's Master Plan for Tobacco Control has chronicled the success of California's Tobacco Control Program since it was implemented by the Proposition 99 landmark tax on tobacco products; and,

WHEREAS, tobacco use remains the number one preventable cause of disease and death in California. Nearly four million Californians (3.6 million adults and 300,000 youth) still smoke, and smoking kills more than 35,000 Californians each year or approximately 96 people every day; and,

WHEREAS, the tobacco industry continues to wage a well-funded campaign to maintain their customer base and to hook new smokers, primarily young adults. According to the Federal Trade Commission, tobacco companies spent more than \$12.5 billion in 2006 on advertising, marketing and promotional expenditures and, in California, these expenditures are estimated at more than \$825 million annually; and,

WHEREAS, low socioeconomic status individuals and diverse communities throughout California are aggressively targeted by the tobacco industry and as a result, often smoke at disproportionately higher rates than the statewide adult and youth averages; and,

WHEREAS, certain cultural groups and communities have a special relationship with natural medicines, herbs, and plants, including traditional tobacco, we respect and acknowledge its cultural or sacred use. When the term tobacco is used it is referring to the use of commercial tobacco; and,

WHEREAS, almost 80% of California's 3.6 million current adult smokers report that they are thinking about quitting within the next six months. However, because access to cessation services is not universally available due to resource limitations and due to geographic and language barriers, only a few of those who attempt to quit will be successful; and,

WHEREAS, children and adults throughout California are still exposed to harmful secondhand smoke. The California Air Resources Board (ARB) formally declared secondhand smoke a Toxic Air Contaminant in January 2006, making California the first state in the nation to do so. The ARB decision was based, in part, on a report by the California Environmental Protection Agency finding that second-hand smoke causes approximately 4,000 deaths in California each year and that 31,000 children in California experience one or more second-hand smoke-related asthma episodes each year; and,

WHEREAS, nearly one in 10 retailers in California still routinely sell tobacco products to minors, although it has been against the law for more than 100 years. The inadequate enforcement of laws against tobacco sales to minors statewide and locally puts these children at risk for tobacco addiction; and,

WHEREAS, smoking-related health costs place a tremendous strain on the economy and state and local budgets, costing \$18.1 billion annually for California or \$3,400 per smoker, according to a report by the UCSF School of Nursing Institute for Health and Aging; and,

WHEREAS, the Tobacco Education and Research Oversight Committee (TEROC) is a legislatively mandated body responsible for overseeing the tobacco education and research programs funded by the tax on tobacco products established by Proposition 99, and for developing California's Master Plan for Tobacco Control. This Master Plan sets forth critical policy and budget recommendations intended to enhance the future effectiveness of California's Tobacco Control Program; and,

WHEREAS, California's Master Plan for Tobacco Control includes five objectives for implementing programs and services:

- **Strengthen the California Tobacco Control Program (Objective 1)**
In order to offset the dramatic declines in Proposition 99 tobacco tax revenues, TEROC recommends an increase in the excise tax on tobacco products with a percentage earmarked for the California Tobacco Control Program.
- **Eliminate disparities and achieve parity in all aspects of tobacco control (Objective 2)**
Efforts must be expanded even further to address the disparities that still exist for communities of color and other priority populations in tobacco prevention and cessation programs, services, and research.
- **Decrease secondhand smoke exposure (Objective 3)**
TEROC recommends that California expand its smokefree workplace protections, restrict smoking in multi-unit housing, adopt comprehensive smoke-free outdoor policies and provide workplace protections in American Indian casinos.
- **Increase the availability and utilization of cessation services (Objective 4)**
Tobacco use cessation is a desired outcome of all initiatives and activities of the Tobacco Control Program, and all tobacco users (including smokeless tobacco users) should have access to appropriate cessation assistance.
- **Limit and regulate tobacco industry products, activities, and influence (Objective 5)**
Given the staggering impact tobacco industry marketing continues to have on the public's health, TEROC recommends that California work to reduce the tobacco industry's influence by eliminating messages and tactics aimed at recruiting new smokers and perpetuating the addiction of current tobacco users.

THEREFORE, I, _____, RESOLVE to support the five objectives contained in California's Master Plan for Tobacco Control, to substantially reduce the disease burden and premature death caused by tobacco use in our state.

Signature

Date