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# The Columbus Dispatcher

By Victoria Cavaliere

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New Jersey could become the first state in the nation to ban cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products in all public parks and beaches if Gov. Chris Christie signs into law a sweeping anti-smoking bill approved by lawmakers.

The bill passed both houses of the New Jersey Legislature with strong bipartisan support, and it was sitting on Christie's desk yesterday, but the Republican governor would not indicate his intentions.

The legislation would prohibit smoking inside all state, county and municipal parks. Public beaches also would be smoke-free, though local officials can opt to save 15 percent of beach land as a designated smoking section.

"This is definitely groundbreaking," said Karen Blumenfeld, the executive director of Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy, a proponent of the New Jersey bill.

"We would be the first state to impose such a wide ban in all public outdoor spaces and the legislation will continue the trend of New Jersey being a model for other jurisdictions' anti-smoking policies," she said.

New Jersey has some of the strictest anti-smoking laws in the U.S.

Supporters say the ban would allow New Jersey residents and visitors to enjoy parks and beaches without smoke and would drastically reduce litter, fire risks and children's exposure to smoking.

"No one needs to sit in an ashtray when enjoying the beach," said state Sen. Joseph Vitale, a sponsor of the bill.

Some residents said the measure would trample on personal liberties.

"I don't think the government needs to be involved," said Bryan Adamson, 32, of Blairstown. "As a smoker, I use common sense and respect for the environment and those around me."

[http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/national\\_world/2014/06/28/n-j--may-widen-smoking-ban.html](http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/national_world/2014/06/28/n-j--may-widen-smoking-ban.html)