

Lights Out: Bloomberg Bans E-Cigarettes in Last Days as Mayor

BY COLIN DAILED A December 30, 2013

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed his final bills into law on Monday, one day before his last in office.

The new laws will require an annual report on poverty in the city, a new database built to track money spent on Superstorm Sandy recovery efforts, measures to bolster emergency preparedness and other measures to reduce toxic emissions from vehicles that deliver trade waste. Bloomberg will also sign a bill that lumps e-cigarettes into the Smoke Free Air Act, meaning the devices are banned everywhere smoking is banned.

The e-cigarette legislation is easily the most controversial bill on the mayor's last slate. The New York City Council recently [voted](#) to restrict the devices, but the decision came among a heated debate over whether such a restriction was necessary.

Little is known about how [e-cigarettes](#) affect the health of those who use them and anyone who might inhale second-hand vapor. Those against the law feel that it is an example of government overregulation and that criminalizing e-cigarette use in most public spaces will take away the reason many smokers switched to "vaping," as e-cigarette use is known.

Proponents of the legislation believe preliminary science is on their [side](#) and that it is better to regulate the devices now than to wait until the side effects are established. It took years to determine how smoking affected a person's health, and they don't want to fight another product already engrained in American culture.

This restriction is the outgoing mayor's last leg in his fight against tobacco products and their descendants. His effort began in [2003](#) when he signed into a law a ban on smoking in bars and restaurants. Eight years later, expanded that to parks and beaches, and last month he raised the city's tobacco-purchasing age to 21.

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