

# DAILY MINER



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## **Kingman approves law banning smoking, driving with kids**

KINGMAN - The City Council was unanimous and enthusiastic earlier this year when members voiced support for an ordinance prohibiting people from smoking in vehicles with minors present.

That support was substantially more mixed Tuesday when the Council voted 4-3 to enact the law, which is a secondary offense much like the seatbelt law, meaning Kingman Police can't pull over a suspected smoker unless that person commits a traffic offense that warrants a stop.

The prohibition takes effect June 18.

A small group of Phoenix-area business owners who sell e-cigarettes requested the Council remove the smokeless, tobacco-less products from the ordinance, saying the so-called electronic nicotine delivery systems actually help people stop smoking tobacco and the vapors are relatively harmless compared to tobacco smoke.

One of those businessmen, Caius McNaughton, commended the teenagers involved with the Kingman Youth Coalition for their stand on smoking and their willingness to engage the system,

However, he also said vapor products like e-cigarettes should not be included in the ban.

"We have worked hard as an industry to get people away from tobacco," he said.

McNaughton said e-cigarette vendors worry the ordinance would link their products to tobacco, even though they can help people stop smoking.

While there are contradictory studies regarding the safety of e-cigarettes, it was pointed out they consist of four ingredients, while combustible cigarettes contain more than 4,000.

"It's like looking at a glass of water and a glass of vodka sitting side-by-side," said one of the men. "They look alike, but you get very different reactions."

The group said studies conducted by the World Health Organization and the Legacy Foundation indicate e-cigarettes are far less harmful than regular cigarettes. Both groups also note that e-cigarettes are relatively new and so the long-term effects, if any, are unknown.

"I feel it's sad we have to legislate stupidity," said Councilman Mark Abram. "I'm conflicted ... at what point do we stop parents from giving their kids five Mountain Dews in a day?"

Councilwoman Carole Young said many smokers who smoke with children present - in and out of cars - don't realize the danger it poses because they grew up with parents and grandparents who smoked.

Young also said she said cigarettes are not illegal and personal rights are involved, but she's also concerned about children exposed to secondhand smoke.

Councilwoman Jen Miles said passage of the ordinance would serve to "raise consciousness" regarding the dangers of smoking and secondhand smoke.

She said passage of the seatbelt law, while also a secondary offense, led to more people wearing seatbelts.

"I have the philosophy that government should stay out of child-rearing," said Councilman Larry Carver. He said e-cigarettes might help people who experience anxiety when they drive, and

he also said he was reluctant to enact a law that might hurt a growing business.

Councilman Stuart Yocum said he would not be willing to remove e-cigarettes from the ban because it would be too much to expect an officer to differentiate between an e-cigarette and a regular cigarette.

Also, there were concerns that since e-cigarettes don't emit a lasting odor like regular cigarettes, it would be hard to prove someone was "vaping" - and equally difficult for the driver to prove he or she wasn't. Young also said there should be a limitation on offenses.

Yocum made a formal recommendation the Council pass the ordinance as written and it passed, with Mayor Richard Anderson, Carver and Young voting against the measure.

A \$50 fine will be levied for first-time offenders and \$100 fine for any subsequent offenses.

This is the first such legislation in the state to take up the issue, according to Police Chief Bob DeVries.

The Kingman Youth Coalition-Beating Up Teen Tobacco lobbied for the ordinance, saying they did so to "protect those who cannot protect themselves" from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

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