

Essex County parks now smoke free

Ordinance aimed at improving air quality in Essex County open spaces

Those looking to catch a cigarette break in one of the county parks will have to look elsewhere as a new resolution put into effect by the Essex County Freeholders on Friday, Oct. 16 has banned smoking in Essex County Parks.

“It’s our priority to ensure the children and families utilizing Essex County’s parks have a safe and healthy environment to enjoy, and this resolution takes a significant step in that direction,” said Freeholder Brendan Gill. “The dangers that tobacco and second hand smoke pose are well-documented, so we must take every step possible to ensure that Essex County residents have access to the basic right of clean air. I remain committed to working with great organizations like NJGASP to continue creating safe spaces for the people of Essex County to enjoy.”

According to Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy (GASP) Executive Director Karen Blumenfeld, Esq., who served as an educational resource provider to the Freeholders, 14 Essex County towns already require smokefree municipal parks already.

“So a county-wide smokefree parks policy will bring consistency to those communities,” Blumenfeld said. “Plus, going smokefree aligns with the county’s environmentally sustainable initiatives as well as its health and wellness campaigns.”

In addition to the 33 parks, reservations and other recreation facilities within the Essex County Parks System, the Essex County Parks and Building Exterior Smoke Free Air Ordinance will also prohibit smoking within 25 feet of outside entrances, exits, or wheelchair ramps serving any entrance or exit, of all structures owned, leased, rented and/or operated by the County of Essex and used for the official business of the County of Essex County.

Gill has long been an advocate of improving air quality standards for Essex County residents, including sponsoring a resolution passed by the Freeholder Board that prioritized the enforcement of state anti-idling laws to promote a smog-free environment and preserve a high standard of air quality for Essex County residents.

http://m.newjerseyhills.com/the_progress/news/essex-county-parks-now-smoke-free/article_90551182-8235-5687-88d7-f90e25c7448a.html?mode=jqm