



Traverse Bay Area Tobacco Coalition



Serving Benzie, Grand Traverse, & Leelanau Counties

Lisa Anne Danto, Coordinator

1209 S. Garfield, Suite C
Traverse City, MI 49686

Phone: 231-271-3684
E-mail: ldanto@mac.com

April 7, 2014

Ann Arbor City Council
301 East Huron Street, Third Floor
Ann Arbor, MI 44104

Dear Ann Arbor City Council Members:

I am writing this letter to express support for a proposed smoke-free outdoor policy for the City of Ann Arbor. I care about Ann Arbor because I was a prior resident of Ann Arbor from 1980-1993 and am still a frequent visitor. I am also an alumn of the University of Michigan: School of Nursing, Class of 1985; and School of Public Health—Policy and Administration, Class of 1992. Since 1993, I have resided in Suttons Bay, Michigan.

In terms of my background, I have been a Registered Nurse for over 29 years, predominantly in public and school health, and became a Nationally Certified Tobacco Addiction Specialist 10 years ago. I have taught tobacco cessation classes for the past 12 years. I started and coordinated a tobacco coalition in Leelanau County for four years that in 2006 became part of a regional tobacco coalition that I have been the coordinator for since, called the **Traverse Bay Area Tobacco Coalition* (TBATC)** based in Traverse City, Michigan.

I am writing on behalf of a broad spectrum of over 80 members—individuals, non-profits, agencies, local government, and businesses—who care about health, human services, and the environment (see attached list). The Coalition's mission is to prevent tobacco use, protect the public from exposure to smoke, and provide tobacco cessation resources to residents in the northwestern region of lower Michigan. Past projects include smoke-free indoor air implementation and evaluation for restaurants, bars, hotels, and housing; prenatal cessation; youth prevention; other tobacco products information; school policies; and national speakers and trainings.

Our tobacco coalition is currently funded to primarily promote tobacco-free (TF) or smoke-free (SF) parks, beaches, fairs, and festivals in the Traverse City region. We are also a leading partner on a national grant project with the American Lung Association and Northern Lakes Community Mental Health, part of which is to establish a SF or TF campus for all four offices in their 6-county service area this year.

I heard you might benefit from learning about our experience, since some of our coalition members have been involved in outdoor smoking restrictions in our area for over 15 years. Our work on this particular issue mainly started because we were asked to help individuals who were having health problems from being exposed to outdoor smoke, but it has since evolved into assisting a variety of SF or TF outdoor policies to be accepted (if not already done independently), and today it has become more of the norm.

The following list summarizes who is identified as having instituted a partial or 100% SF or TF outdoor policy at all of their property locations:

in Benzie County:

Crystal Mountain Resort – SF

in Grand Traverse County:

City of Traverse City Parks (including beaches, waterfront areas, playgrounds, and farmer's market) – SF

National Cherry Festival – 100% SF

Traverse City Film Festival – 100% SF

Traverse City Wine & Art Festival – 100% SF

Garfield Township's Parks – SF

Grand Traverse County's Civic Center Park & Recreation Center – 100% TF

Northwestern Michigan College (all sites including some waterfront) – 100% TF

Interlochen Center for the Arts (includes Summer Camp, High School, Classes, & Concerts) – 100% SF

Traverse City Beach Bums Wuerfel Park (Minor League baseball team) – SF

Centre Ice Arena (including Detroit Red Wings Training Camp) – 100% SF

Jacob's Corn Maze – 100% SF

Northwestern Michigan Surgery Center – 100% SF

Oryana Natural Foods Market Co-Op – 100% TF

AlcoTec Wire Corporation – SF

Steve's Place (nightclub) – 100% SF

in Leelanau County:

Camp Kohahna / Camp Leelanau / The Leelanau Outdoor Center – 100% SF

Discovery Center—5 water/boating education themed organizations – 100% SF

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians—150' SF from entrances and SF PowWow

Leelanau County government properties—includes the county court building and jail facility—100% TF

in the Region (multi-county):

BATA—Bay Area Transportation Authority (including bus stops) – TF

Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department – 100% TF

Munson Medical Center (including all affiliates) – 100% SF

TART Trails—Traverse Area Recreation Trails – SF

In addition, the majority of public and private schools (pre-K–12) in our region do not allow smoking or any tobacco use outside on their property, including during non-school hours, and during athletic events both on their property and at school-sponsored events off-site. A list is available upon request.

Reasons why we have had strong local support for outdoor tobacco use restrictions:

- It is self-enforcing and not a burdensome policy.
- Businesses and local government realize that it is good for tourism.
- The majority of people do not smoke and do not want to be exposed to smoke outdoors either.
- It reduces outdoor maintenance costs, like litter clean-up costs.
- The environment is a value, and it protects wildlife and water.
- It is a family-friendly policy and promotes good role modeling to children.
- It is a child safety issue—prevents asthma attacks and nicotine ingestion poisoning.
- It promotes health and fitness—for employees, volunteers, and the public.
- It can help to reduce tobacco use.
- It reduces the risk for fire and liability costs.
- It reduces unsightliness and is more welcoming to the public.
- Smokers understand that non-smokers do not want to be exposed to their smoke.

The people responsible for managing the above properties and the majority of the public have been pretty happy about these policies so far, most of which have been in place for the past 5-7 years. This is mainly because it has not really posed a problem, has proven to be more of a benefit than a detriment, and because we have implemented strategies to help the community understand these changes.

Signage:

The most important method of enforcement is to post signage about the policy on the property, preferably near entrances, on sign-posts, or where other rules are posted, to inform both the tobacco users and the public about the rules. Having a sign posted makes it easier to know about, a person can point to it, and it represents the authority of the policy if it is questioned. I have actually collected a variety of photos of signage from around our community and from other places in Michigan and other states, and am willing to share them if it is helpful. Where signs have not been posted permanently or for temporary events, it has caused confusion and non-compliance, so signage is really effective and the easiest approach.

Community Education:

The second important strategy is to educate the community about the change. What this means is to make sure the new policy is added on websites, social media, brochures, maps, schedules, and in all publicity. It should be included in any contracts or rental agreements issued for special events, such as festivals and fairs, and weddings. There should be a press release distributed to the media and to pertinent local agencies or organizations before the policy is effective. If it is an option, there can be a special public event to bring attention about the new policy, to further inform the public. There are examples of these types of events that have already been done in other communities around the state.

We have also done multiple cigarette butt and tobacco trash clean-up events with volunteer organizations from Spring to Fall. These events in and of themselves help educate children and residents about the problem. But in addition, we recently saved the tobacco waste collected and put it in a special aquarium box to visually display how much it accumulates, and show it to children and adults at prevention education presentations, health fairs, special community events, professional events, conferences, etc. We ask people to guess how many cigarette butts are in there and it is very effective. It also motivates some people to want to quit smoking.

We have also partnered with Bay Area Recycling for Charities, because they did not like the fact that cigarette butts are one of the few things we can't recycle, and the owner wanted to do something proactive about it. He then partnered with the Goodwill Inn's Street Outreach Program, involving the homeless population to help clean up the cigarette butt litter in Traverse City, and in return, they received useful commodities, like combs and flashlights. With or without the incentives, their group has collected the most volume, compared with the other volunteer groups. What's even more interesting is that the Program's Coordinator has reported that as a result of some of the homeless people participating in this project, they started to recruit others to voluntarily help clean up and were telling others not to litter, and were improving some of their own self-hygiene too, because they found something to care about and felt good about doing it.

Enforcement:

As for the need for law enforcement, **I have yet to hear about a single situation in our community that has required legal intervention.** Usually, someone nearby handles it, informing the person(s) about the policy, and the majority of people do comply. We have found that most smokers are law-abiding citizens, are adaptable, and have become more and more accustomed to experiencing outdoor smoking or tobacco use restrictions. Most people do not want it to escalate to a confrontative situation.

However, for some highly populated special events, some festival organizers have used their security staff or volunteer managers to assist with asking smokers to relocate or to put out their tobacco product, but they are also in charge of enforcing all of the other park rules, such as alcohol use, pets, noise, bicycles, disturbing others, etc., so this is not really an extra cost and is an option to make it a more pleasant experience for the majority of attendees.

As an example, at last year's National Cherry Festival, some volunteers walked around the entire grounds to "patrol smoking" and only found about 10 smokers per hour, who politely relocated or put their butt out, stating that they did not know about the policy, because the signage was not posted properly and the designated smoking area locations were confusing. In the outdoor food dining areas, there was maybe 1 person smoking out of 100 people. Given the size of the event, 500,000 visitors, we consider this a very low rate of non-compliance. We plan to post better signage at July's 2014 festival, to improve these rates even more and because for the first time, smoking will no longer be allowed anywhere on the site.

Some places are in the beginning process of considering a future policy: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Park (in both Benzie and Leelanau Counties), and the YMCA of Grand Traverse Bay.

I have also attached the most recent **Summary List of Smoke-Free or Tobacco-Free Parks and Beaches in Michigan**, in case you did not already receive it. I'm sure other communities would be willing to advise you about their experience regarding implementation and evaluation. I am also willing to help consult with city administrators, by distance or in person, if I can be of any further service. My contact information is above on the letterhead.

Sincerely,



Lisa Anne Danto, RN, BSN, MPH, NCTAS
TBATC Coordinator & Tobacco Addiction Specialist

**The TBATC is funded by an annual grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health Tobacco Section and our fiduciary is Catholic Human Services of Northern Lower Michigan, based in Traverse City, who is supported by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gaylord.*

Traverse Bay Area Tobacco Coalition

Summary List of Supporters / Partners / Recipients of Services 2002–2014

AlcoTec Wire Corporation
American Cancer Society
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Nurses Association—Michigan—Northern Region
Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights
Asthma Coalition of Northwest Michigan
Bay Area Recycling for Charities (BARC)
Benzie County 19th Judicial Circuit Court
Benzie County Board of Commissioners
Benzie County Human Services Collaborating Body
Benzie-Leelanau County Health Department—Environmental and Personal Health Divisions
Benzie-Leelanau District Board of Health
Benzie Public Schools
Blissfest Music Organization
Catholic Human Services
Centra Wellness (Benzie & Manistee CMH)
Crystal Mountain Resort
Elk Rapids Public Schools
Forest Area Public Schools
Frankfort-Elberta Area Public Schools
Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes
Glen Lake Public Schools
Goodwill Industries of Northern Michigan—Street Outreach Program
Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
Grand Traverse Community Collaborative
Grand Traverse County Commission
Grand Traverse County Health Department— Environmental and Personal Health Divisions
Grand Traverse County Parks & Recreation Department
Grand Traverse County Probate and Family Court
Grand Traverse County Sherriff Department
Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department
Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation
Grand Valley State University
Great Start Collaborative
Great Wolf Lodge—Traverse City
Hagerty Insurance
Hilshire Brands (formerly Sara Lee Bakery)
Inland Seas Educational Association

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Summary List of Supporters / Partners / Recipients of Services 2002–2014

Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan
Kalkaska Public Schools
Keith J. Charters Traverse City State Park
Kingsley Public Schools
Leelanau County 13th Judicial Circuit Court
Leelanau County Board of Commissioners
Leelanau County Family Coordinating Council
Leelanau County Sherriff's Department
Leelanau County Solid Waste Commission
The Leelanau School
Leelanau St. Mary's School
Leelanau State Park
Leelanau Township Community Foundation
Leland Public Schools
Mancelona Public Schools
Michigan Association of Alcoholism & Drug Abuse Counselors (MAADAC)
Michigan Cancer Consortium
Michigan Department of Community Health
Michigan Land Use Institute
Michigan Prevention Association
Michigan Works!
Miscellaneous: behavioral health providers, businesses, churches, health professionals, individual residents, and restaurants/bars
Munson Medical Center
NAADAC—The National Association of Addiction Professionals
National Cherry Festival
Northern Lakes Community Mental Health
Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council (NMEAC)
Northport Public Schools
Northwest Michigan Council of Governments
Northwestern Michigan College
Oryana Food Cooperative
Pangea's Pizza Pub
Paul Oliver Memorial Hospital
Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services—Traverse City Clinic
Porterhouse Productions
Prevention Network of Michigan
Priority Health
Rotary Club of Traverse City

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Summary List of Supporters / Partners / Recipients of Services 2002–2014

Safe Harbor of Grand Traverse
SEEDS (including Great Lakes Bioneers Program)
Smoke-Free Environments Law Project
Suttons Bay Public Schools
Tobacco-Free Michigan
Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District (TBAISD)
Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS)
Traverse City City Commission
Traverse City Department of Public Works
Traverse City Downtown Development Authority
Traverse City Film Festival
Traverse City Housing Commission
Traverse City Little League
Traverse City Parks & Recreation Department
Traverse City Police Department
Tri-County Coalition for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (TCCPCAN)
United Way of Northwest Michigan
Watershed Center of Grand Traverse Bay
YMCA—Grand Traverse Bay