



# Saint Louis County

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **County Board approves ordinance banning e-cigarettes in public places**

The St. Louis County Board has approved an ordinance banning the use of electronic delivery devices, more commonly known as e-cigarettes, in public places, retail environments and places of work. The measure mimics the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act, banning e-cigarettes anywhere that traditional cigarettes are prohibited. The ordinance takes effect July 1, 2015. The vote was 5 to 2, with Commissioners Tom Rukavina and Chris Dahlberg opposed.

During a public hearing prior to the vote, numerous doctors and health advocates urged the Board to pass the ordinance and protect indoor air quality. Several speakers noted that allowing e-cigarettes indoors normalizes a behavior that many have worked to denormalize. Opponents argued that vaping is a healthier alternative to smoking, and that exception should be made to allow sampling of e-cigarettes in businesses that sell them.

Commissioner Patrick Boyle brought the ordinance forward following the unanimous recommendation of the Public Health and Human Services Advisory Committee. He noted that Duluth, Hermantown and Ely already have similar ordinances in place, and together they have 99,000 residents – almost half of the County’s population – already following these rules.

E-cigarettes closely resemble and mimic the act of smoking by having users inhale vaporized liquid nicotine or other substances created by heat through an electronic ignition system. St. Louis County joins 23 cities and seven other counties in Minnesota in passing such an ordinance.

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