

**Testimony of  
Lance Boucher, Senior Division Director, State Public Policy,  
American Lung Association  
Regarding**

*LD 269 “An Act to Prohibit Smoking in Bus Shelters”*

March 4, 2021

Good afternoon Chairs Claxton and Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Lance Boucher and I am the Senior Division Director, State Public Policy for the American Lung Association. The Lung Association is the nation’s oldest voluntary public health organization with a mission to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. We do this through education, advocacy, and research.

I am sorry I could not be with you in person, but am pleased to offer to you today the strong support of the American Lung Association for LD 269, “An Act to Prohibit Smoking in Bus Shelters.” The Lung Association supports measures to require totally smokefree environments to protect public health. Maine has long been a leader in strong smoke-free laws protecting workers, children, and non-smokers from second-hand smoke exposure. In fact, for the last sixteen years we have received an “A” grade every year in the American Lung Association’s State of Tobacco Control Report Card for smokefree environments. This bill offered by Senator Sanborn will help to offer clarification that bus shelters are enclosed public spaces and included in Maine’s smokefree laws.

Secondhand smoke can cause or make worse a wide range of damaging health effects in children and adults, including lung cancer, respiratory infections and asthma and there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke is a serious public health problem and the statistics are startling:

- Secondhand smoke causes approximately 7,330 deaths from lung cancer and 33,950 deaths from heart disease each year.<sup>1</sup>
- Between 1964 and 2014, 2.5 million people died from exposure to secondhand smoke, according to the 2014 report from the U.S. Surgeon General. The report also concluded that secondhand smoke is a definitive cause of stroke.<sup>1</sup>
- There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke and even short-term exposure potentially can increase the risk of heart attacks.<sup>2</sup>
- Secondhand smoke contains hundreds of chemicals known to be toxic or carcinogenic, including formaldehyde, benzene, vinyl chloride, arsenic ammonia and hydrogen cyanide.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, while secondhand smoke has yet to be established as a known risk factor in developing more severe COVID-19 symptoms, many of the underlying conditions caused or made worse by secondhand smoke are potential risk factors. Allowing smoking in confined spaces can also compromise the use of face masks since someone would need to take the mask off to smoke, which could contribute to further spread of COVID-19 when a smoker exhales.

No one deserves to have to choose between their transportation needs and their health. The American Lung Association urges you to vote LD 269 “Ought to Pass” to help clarify that Maine’s popular and strong smokefree public places laws include bus shelters.