



Reynolds Building  
4th & Main Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27102

Contact: David B. Fishel  
Public Relations  
(910) 741-7654

RJRT 94-07

05/23/94

Washington, D.C. -- In an effort "to bring some balance to the debate surrounding second-hand smoke and other issues concerning cigarettes," R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. today launched a campaign to present the company's opinions to the public.

The first in a series of public information messages that will be published nationally appeared today, featured a headline reading "Secondhand Smoke: How Much Are Non-smokers Exposed To?" It informed the public that, in Reynolds Tobacco's opinion, non-smokers are routinely exposed to "very little" second-hand smoke and that "the solution to most smoking issues can be found in accommodation."

"There are ways for smokers and non-smokers to co-exist peacefully," the ad said. "And we encourage discussion that will help solve the issues without resorting to Government intervention."

The new campaign was kicked off with a press conference at the National Press Club. During the conference, Maura Ellis, Reynolds Tobacco's director of external communications, told reporters, "During the past couple of years, there have been a lot of misconceptions about second-hand smoke -- including claims that exposure to second-hand smoke is more dangerous than active smoking.

"But," she said, "studies show that second-hand smoke is highly diluted -- and, on average, people are exposed to very small quantities of second-hand smoke."

How small?

-more-

51141 0633

"Vanishingly small," according to Dr. Chris Coggins, a Reynolds Tobacco principal scientist and board certified toxicologist who has performed toxicological evaluations on tobacco smoke since 1976.

Coggins reviewed scientific data on the amount of second-hand smoke particles typically found in homes where smoking takes place. He said that the amount is about the same as the amount of hair spray one would find in those homes if one 12-ounce can of hair spray were evenly spread throughout all of the rooms of 30,000 standard-sized houses. That's about the size of "a city slightly smaller than Silver Springs, Maryland."

"Put in plain English," Coggins said, "any material can be made dangerous if the dose is big enough. But concentrations measured in millionths of a gram per cubic meter -- the levels typically found for second-hand smoke -- represent such minuscule doses that it is scientifically implausible that they could result in meaningful toxicological activity."

During his presentation, Coggins explained "some of the significant flaws in the data that the EPA report on second-hand smoke is based on" and he described "just how fragile the EPA's conclusions are in light of data published prior to the release of its report."

Ellis noted that "in virtually every case, attempts to ban smoking are being driven by the EPA's risk assessment on second-hand smoke." But recently, the Congressional Research Service "characterized the epidemiological evidence the EPA relied on as, quote, 'weak' and 'uncertain'."

Coggins said research he has published has shown that "animals exposed to second-hand smoke at concentrations hundreds of times higher than those that nonsmokers that are typically exposed to show no meaningful changes at all."

In the first message in Reynolds Tobacco's new information campaign, the company informs the public that nonsmokers are typically exposed to "very little" second-hand smoke. For instance, the ad states that, in the company's opinion:

- In a month, a non-smoker living with a smoker would, on average, be exposed to secondhand smoke equivalent to smoking approximately 1 1/2 cigarettes.

- During the same time period, a non-smoking waiter working eight hours a day, five days a week would, on average, be exposed to the equivalent of 2 cigarettes.
- And a non-smoker sharing a modern office with a smoker would, on average, be exposed to the equivalent of about 1 1/4 cigarettes.

During the news conference, Ellis said the company has launched the campaign because it believes "that it is important for the public to be fully acquainted with both sides of the issue -- so people can make informed decisions."

Echoing testimony before Congress last month by Reynolds Tobacco Chairman James W. Johnston, Ellis noted that she and others at Reynolds Tobacco "believe it's time to understand that various efforts to totally ban smoking in public places, including workplaces, are part of a broader effort to prohibit smoking in the United States."

She noted that "the goal of the anti-smoking industry is to bring back prohibition" and that "the current efforts to prohibit smoking are based on a faulty analysis of the science by the EPA."

In addition, Ellis said, "surveys consistently show that Americans overwhelmingly oppose prohibition." She cited a March 1994 Gallup/CNN/USA Today poll that indicated:

- 86 percent of Americans believe that smoking should be legal;
- 61 percent of Americans oppose smoking bans in restaurants;
- 67 percent oppose workplace smoking bans;
- and 78 percent oppose bans in hotels and motels.

"Americans say they prefer peaceful coexistence -- not government mandate -- and not prohibition," Ellis said, noting, "there are common-sense ways to work out problems without turning 45 million Americans into outlaws and social outcasts."

The second-hand smoke message, the first in Reynolds Tobacco's new public information campaign, was placed in *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *Winston-Salem Journal*, *National Journal* and *Roll Call*.

###