

**For Immediate Release**  
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**WORKERS HEALTH TOO IMPORTANT TO WAIT - DIX**

**VICTORIA** – New Democrat Opposition Health Critic Adrian Dix has submitted an amendment to Bill 10, *Tobacco Sales (Banning Tobacco and Smoking in Public Places and Schools) Amendment Act, 2007*, that would see the ban on smoking rooms happen immediately.

“The Health Minister has acknowledged that second-hand smoke is dangerous to staff in the service industry that have to work in sanctioned smoking rooms, yet he is willing to have people continue to work in that environment for another 12 months until the new regulations take place,” said Dix.

Bill 10 will put an end to smoking rooms in public places, including bars and restaurants. However, the Health Minister has admitted that these new rules will not be brought in force until sometime in 2008. Dix’s amendment would see those aspects of the Bill protecting worker from second hand smoke are brought into force with Royal Assent.

“It doesn’t make sense to make servers, cleaners and other staff wait longer for the protection from second-hand smoke they deserved six years ago,” said Dix.

In 2001 Workers’ Compensation Board attempted to pass strict regulations on smoking in public places. The B.C. Liberal government over-ruled WCB’s proposed regulations and instead allowed for the creation of smoking rooms where staff could spend up to 20 percent of their time.

“It was a mistake for the Premier to not protect workers in 2001 when he inappropriately overruled the WCB proposal, and it is another mistake to continue delaying such protection,” said Dix.

Dix said that waiting a year or more to enforce the ban is just foot-dragging. “These changes will not come as a surprise to anyone in the province. The Premier announced them last October,” said Dix. “It doesn’t take much to make a ‘smoking room’ a ‘non-smoking room’.”

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