

# Letter: Tahoe events need to be in tobacco-free venues

To the community,

I would gladly help to support events like the Sierra Nevada Alliance's film festival, but I have chronic bronchitis and asthma which makes it impossible for me to enter a smoke-filled casino, let alone attend the film festival.

How can you hold this event in a toxic, smoke-filled casino? It is discrimination against people who have respiratory illnesses, heart conditions, and even people who just want to live a healthy life without exposing themselves to the 63 known cancer causing carcinogens, 4,000 to 8,000 toxic chemicals, and 619 deadly additives that are in secondhand tobacco smoke. There is a reason that the Surgeon General has stated "there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke."



It has been proven that secondhand smoke causes permanent heart and lung damage with even a small amount of exposure.

Why not hold this event in a clean, healthy, non-toxic environment like Heavenly Village Cinema? Or the community college?

There is no excuse for holding an environmentally friendly film festival in a venue filled with toxic air.

According to my friend who worked as head of research for the third largest tobacco company in the world, "If the tobacco industry were forced to list the ingredients on a package of

cigarettes or cigars, you would not legally be able to throw them into a landfill.”

Each cigarette is a miniature toxic waste dump containing cadmium (battery acid), formaldehyde, hydrogen cyanide (used to kill people in gas chambers during the war!), benzene, acetone, arsenic (rat poison), polonium 210 (radioactive), and nicotine (poison) to name just a few ingredients.

So why are you forcing all of your film-goers to attend a film festival in a toxic smoke-filled casino? Simply separating a room within a building is completely useless. The ventilation system carries all the gaseous matter throughout the entire building.

If you truly care about the environment, stop holding events in the toxic smoke-filled casinos. At the very least, you can encourage the casinos to go smoke-free along with the rest of the world. Entire countries are now smoke-free in all indoor areas including casinos. Yet here in Tahoe, all it takes is a bit of blood money from the murdering tobacco companies (aka the Gaming Association, etc.) and everyone ignores the fact that over 600,000 Americans died of smoking last year and 63,000 died prematurely from secondhand smoke last year.

Stop patronizing businesses that promote tobacco. Tobacco kills more people each year than all other causes of death. Please move the film festival to a place where everyone can go and see it. A non-smoking venue.

**Diana Woodbury, South Lake Tahoe**