

# THE TOBACCO INSTITUTE

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President

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*RW Murray*  
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March 25, 1988

## MEMORANDUM

RECEIVED

TO: Executive Committee *Sam*  
FR: Samuel D. Chilcote, Jr.

MAR 28

FRANK L. ...

The Institute staff responded quickly and aggressively to the announcement March 23 that Northwest Airlines plans to ban smoking on all of its U.S. flights, effective April 23.

In the hours immediately following the Northwest press conference, Institute spokespersons responded to nearly 20 media queries, including AP, UPI, Reuters, Wall Street Journal, and NBC. We made appearances on CNN and CBS Morning News. A videotape of Brennan Moran's CBS appearance is enclosed for your information. *(Jack Nelson has the tape.)*

In addition, we have provided USA Today with an op-ed for its March 28 editorial feature. We have declined to appear opposite Tobacco Product Liability Project Director Richard Daynard on Sunday's David Brinkley public affairs program.

Our press appearances to date, and future media efforts, are focusing on Northwest's poor record of passenger complaints and safety violations. Although the airline ranked second in 1987 in total passenger complaints to the Department of Transportation, smoking was eighth, representing less than 3 percent of complaints to Northwest.

We also are pointing out that the 30 percent of the flying public who choose to smoke have good alternatives to Northwest in most of the major cities it serves.

To follow up the immediate press interest, The Institute is issuing a news release to major media markets promoting our availability to comment on the Northwest ban. Also, David Brenton, chairman of the Smoker's Rights Alliance (SRA) has challenged Northwest's marketing director to debate its decision. Copies of The Institute release and the SRA media advisory are enclosed. Both will be part of a two-tiered media effort focusing initially on national media and moving next week into Northwest hub markets.

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Additional activities which are underway include:

- o Polling of other airlines to determine if others will follow suit. At this time, none appear to be headed in that direction. Several believe Northwest's move to be ill advised.

- o Immediate coordination with the public affairs' groups at Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds, both of which have launched communications programs in response to Northwest.

- o Op-eds by SRA's David Brenton to be offered to newspapers which have carried the Northwest story.

We are examining the prospects of advertisements sponsored by SRA that "clear the air" about Northwest's customer satisfaction record. These ads would respond to the "Northwest Clears the Air" campaign announcing the smoking ban, which reportedly will be launched March 26.

- o Review of marketing data to isolate the numbers of Northwest passengers who smoke who will become potential customers for competitor airlines. These data indicate that 31.7 percent of frequent business travelers on Northwest (flyers who take 10 or more business trips over a 12-month period) are smokers.

- o Institute and member company staff are in the process of approaching Northwest's competitors to suggest and provide help in offering trade-ins on tickets, frequent flyer mileage and membership clubs to the Northwest smokers who have been abandoned by the airline.

We will have a brief report on this activity and our overall airline program at our April 7 meeting.

SDC:mms

Enclosures

cc: Communications Committee  
TI Senior Staff

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