

News Release



Congressman **DICK DURBIN**



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DURBIN SAYS CABIN AIR QUALITY REPORT CONFIRMS HAZARDS OF TOBACCO SMOKE

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Rep. Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.) and U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) today announced the findings of the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Cabin Air Quality report, which confirms the health risks of tobacco smoke in airplane cabins.

"With implementation of the permanent smoking ban on all flights within the continental United States just five days away, this report confirms what we have been saying all along about the dangers of second hand smoke," Durbin said.

The Department of Transportation's Cabin Air Quality Report found that the pollutants which pose the highest risks of death and illness to airline flight attendants and passengers are environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) and cosmic radiation. The study shows that ETS exposure increases lifetime lung cancer risks by 12-15 premature cancer deaths per 100,000 cabin crew members, and 0.3-0.8 premature cancer deaths per 100,000 frequent flying non-smoking passengers.

Durbin also pointed out that the study does not include other risks posed by tobacco such as non-cancer deaths, non-fatal illnesses, and effects on special sub-groups such as children and asthmatics.

"There may be little we can do about cosmic radiation but we have taken action to control the health threat of tobacco smoke on airplanes by banning smoking on more than 99% of all domestic flights," Durbin said. "The study concludes that ventilation is impractical; therefore elimination of the risk is the best means of prevention."

The Durbin-Lautenberg measure, enacted as part of the fiscal 1990 funding bill for the Department of Transportation, requires that beginning Feb. 25 smoking be prohibited on all domestic flights within the continental United States, and on all flights to Alaska and Hawaii that last six hours or less. An estimated 24 flights would be exempted from the law.

DOT's Cabin Air Quality study was conducted during the period when smoking was banned on flights of two hours or less, but prior to passage of the new law.

"February 25, 1990 will go down in history as a great victory for public health, airline cabin crews, and all airline passengers," Durbin said. "This smoking ban has opened the door wider to sensible regulation of dangerous tobacco smoke."

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