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Caring For Georgia's People and Parks

Dear GRPA Directors/Members:

The Georgia Recreation and Park Association (GRPA) in partnership with the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is reaching out to you to offer its support for the adoption of a 100% Tobacco Free Park Policy within all public parks in the state of Georgia. GRPA is dedicated to promoting healthy life styles through the utilization of park facilities and recreation services for the well-being of each citizen individually and the community as a whole. As a multi-disciplinary group of professionals, it is our job to work with public agencies, private businesses, educational institutions, clinical settings and citizen advocates to support policies for the care and protection of all community members. We see the effects of tobacco use in the public every day and want to encourage local parks to adopt the 100% Tobacco Free Park Policy.

GRPA believes the delivery of recreation and park services in the state has a tremendous impact economically, environmentally and socially. Currently, 20 out of 203 park systems in Georgia have this policy in place; this means 2,510,092 people are protected from the dangers of second hand smoke.

GRPA recognizes that local parks may have a rule that addresses tobacco use; however, the adoption of the 100% Tobacco Free Park Policy would more clearly define that no youth, staff members or visitors are permitted to use any tobacco products including Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) at any time 24 hours/ 7 days a week:

- In any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented or chartered in a specified parks system
- On any parks grounds and property; including athletic fields and parking lots- owned leased, rented or chartered by a specified parks systems

Tobacco use is a danger to everyone. Second-hand smoke is also a danger to everyone, especially children, and particularly to those who have asthma and other respiratory illnesses. It is imperative for youth serving organizations to have youth utilize parks and recreation facilities that are tobacco free. Tobacco free park policies can prevent youth from starting to smoke, and encourage youth to quit smoking. This policy would also eliminate the issue of cigarette litter in parks. Cigarettes are mostly made of cellulose acetate (a form of plastic), not readily biodegradable and are ingestible by wildlife and small children posing a major public health concern. Adopting the 100% tobacco free park policy would allow parks to save on cost associated cigarette litter.



Active Lifestyles... Vital Communities

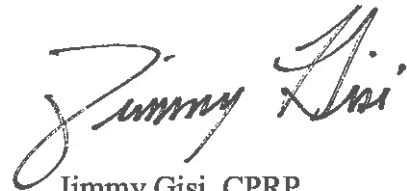
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Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact Anne-Marie Coleman, Youth Tobacco Policy Analyst at anne-marie.coleman@dph.ga.gov for more information; also visit our website at <http://dph.georgia.gov/tobacco-free-places>. Please see the attached sample policy, the current map and spreadsheet noting the 20 parks systems with the policy in place, and other supporting documents for your review. We welcome the opportunity to partner with you to adopt the 100% Tobacco Free Park Policy. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,



Missy Bailey, CPRP, CYSA
President



Jimmy Gisi, CPRP
Executive Director