

**Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust
Board of Directors**

“Protect Oklahoma Workers from Secondhand Smoke”

November 17, 2009

WHEREAS secondhand tobacco smoke is a significant risk to the health of non-smokers as conclusively documented by the 2006 Report of the Surgeon General, and

Whereas, a 2009 report from the independent Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences found that “data consistently demonstrate that secondhand-smoke exposure increases the risk of coronary heart disease and heart attacks and that smoking bans reduce this risk,” and

WHEREAS annually an estimated 700 deaths in Oklahoma from lung cancer and other cancers, heart disease and respiratory diseases, are attributable to exposure to secondhand smoke, and

WHEREAS secondhand smoke is a known cancer causing agent in humans (a Group A carcinogen), for which there is no safe level of exposure, and

WHEREAS Oklahoma’s smoking laws still permit smoking rooms in restaurants where workers are permitted to work in environments with concentrated secondhand smoke, and

WHEREAS the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) concluded in 2005 that ventilated smoking rooms do not protect workers from the health hazards of secondhand smoke and that the only way to effectively eliminate health risk associated with indoor exposure is to ban smoking activity, and

WHEREAS Oklahoma’s smoking laws still permit smoking throughout certain types of workplaces, such as stand-alone bars, where high levels of secondhand smoke commonly are encountered, and

WHEREAS the presence of smoking rooms and smoking venues not only causes a preventable serious health risk for employees and patrons of these places but also discourages smokers from quitting, makes smoking seem socially appropriate, and encourages young Oklahomans to take up smoking, and

WHEREAS 75 percent of adult smokers in Oklahoma want to completely quit and, in any given year, over one-half of adult smokers in Oklahoma make at least one serious quit attempt, and

WHEREAS the national trend as policy makers become increasingly aware of the scientific evidence of the harmful health effects caused by exposure to secondhand smoke is to adopt state laws and local ordinances eliminating smoking inside indoor public places and workplaces, with fewer and fewer exemptions, and

WHEREAS 25 states and hundreds of cities across the country have already passed laws prohibiting smoking throughout workplaces including all restaurants and bars, without the smoking rooms such as have been allowed in Oklahoma, and

WHEREAS both the Oklahoma State Board of Health and the Oklahoma Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Advisory Committee have previously adopted resolutions with recommendations similar to the following,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust respectfully recommends effective public policy to repeal the exemptions in Oklahoma statutes that permit smoking rooms and smoking inside public places and workplaces.