

Dear Editor,

In response to last week's letter "Technology Trumps Ban," I'd like to inform your readers that the issue of Smokeeter filtration units has not been ignored in the discussion of smoking bans in Minnesota. The units may be able to reduce the "haze" caused by secondhand smoke (SHS), but they don't eliminate the health hazards of SHS.

Second hand smoke (SHS) consists of both particles and gases. Filtration units, like Smokeeters, that are properly maintained should be effective at removing larger particles, but laboratory tests have shown that they are less effective in removing the smaller particles that are the most hazardous to health. Moreover, they remove little or none of the hazardous and cancer causing gases found in SHS.

In 2005, the Center for Energy and the Environment and the Minnesota Partnership for Action Against Tobacco measured particles in the air of 25 Twin Cities bars and restaurants before smoke-free ordinances were implemented. The 13 locations with filtration units had levels of particles as high as or higher than the 12 locations that did not have them. The key findings of the air quality monitoring can be found at www.mpaat.org.

After implementation of the Hennepin County smoking ban, monitoring revealed that SHS particulate matter was virtually eliminated. The monitoring results speak for themselves - smoking bans eliminate SHS and its health risks; filtration units do not.

Respectfully,

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