



Published: 02.07.2008

Self-snuffing cigarettes bill heads to full House

By Howard Fischer

CAPITOL MEDIA SERVICES

PHOENIX — State lawmakers began paving the way Wednesday for "safer" cigarettes — if not for the smoker, then for everyone else.

Legislation given unanimous approval by the House Commerce Committee would mandate that all cigarettes sold in Arizona be designed so that they snuff themselves out if not actually being smoked. HB 2483 now goes to the full House.

The problem, according to John Flynn of the Arizona Urban Fire District Association is that tobacco — and the paper in which it is wrapped — has a tendency to keep burning.

"We know by the data that most smoking-material fires start in mattresses, bedding, upholstered furniture and waste products," said Flynn, former fire chief of Apache Junction. He said this often occurs when someone falls asleep and a lit cigarette ignites the materials.

What this bill requires is that each cigarette have two specially designed bands that are less flammable than the rest of the cigarette.

"What happens is, if you do not continue to smoke the cigarette and you leave it unattended, the cigarette will basically self-extinguish when it hits one of those bands," he said.

Similar legislation last year stalled. What's different this year is the measure now has the backing of the major tobacco companies.

That appears to come down to the fact that the requirement, originally adopted only by New York state, already has been copied elsewhere. Flynn said 22 other states now have similar laws, with another 12 considering the legislation this year.

"It's inevitable," said Don Isaacson, who represents Reynolds American.

All content copyright © 1999-2008 AzStarNet, Arizona Daily Star and its wire services and suppliers and may not be republished without permission. All rights reserved. Any copying, redistribution, or retransmission of any of the contents of this service without the expressed written consent of Arizona Daily Star or AzStarNet is prohibited.