

THE TOBACCO INSTITUTE

ONE COLUMBIA PLACE
ALBANY, NY 12207

RICHARD E. SCANLAN
Regional Vice President
518/462-6501

March 5, 1984

Dear Assemblyman:

Recognizing your interest in cigarette fire safety as a cosponsor last year of A.3814/S.3059, we would like to inform you of a number of significant developments that have occurred in the past year on this issue.

1. Related Federal Legislation

During the past year, the tobacco industry has been working closely with Representative Moakley -- who has sponsored "self-extinguishing" or "fire-safe" cigarette legislation in the House -- on a bill that would authorize and direct a federal study of technology that might reduce the cigarette's ignition potential. The study would evaluate existing brands as well as experimental cigarettes to see if any can be found that have a lower propensity to ignite fires, without other undesirable changes.

The study, which is expected to cost approximately \$2.5 million, would be supervised by the Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Relevant personnel from the National Bureau of Standards, Department of Health and Human Services, National Academy of Sciences, representatives of the fire service community and tobacco company scientists also would be asked to participate in the study. We continue to believe that a federal study of the cigarette fire safety issue would be far superior to an inadequately funded state-by-state approach.

We are hopeful that a federal study bill, acceptable to all interested parties, will be introduced in both the House and Senate within the next few weeks.

2. International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) - Stamm Committee

Chief William Stamm of the Milwaukee Fire Department chaired an ad hoc committee of the IAFC to examine the technical data on "fire-safe" cigarettes and to recommend a position for the chiefs on the issue. The committee just issued its final report, after meeting in November 1983 and January 1984 in New York City. The five members of the committee were Chiefs William Stamm, John J. Hart, Chief of the New York City Fire Department; Dr. Dietrich Hoffman, a noted medical scientist at

the American Health Foundation in Valhalla, New York, whose research focuses on cigarette smoke; Dr. Richard D. Stewart, another medical scientist with research into the effects of smoke; and Richard L.P. Custer, Professor of Fire Engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

The committee concluded that the original federal legislation on "self-extinguishing" cigarettes should not be supported because it presumed we were further along in knowledge needed for standard setting than we are; it gave inadequate attention to the changes that "self-extinguishing" cigarettes would cause in cigarette smoke; and it denied a role for the fire service in the then-proposed federal study. The committee concluded that no one, including those sometimes cited in debates in New York, has demonstrated that a more "fire-safe" cigarette exists or can be made. The committee called for federal legislation of the same type -- a scientific study that includes attention to the above issues. A copy of the Stamm Committee report is available for your review.

3. Fire Deaths and Fires from Careless Smoking Have Dropped

Fires and deaths related to careless smoking have decreased. The latest data from the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control show that arson (21%) and heating (19%) are now the leading causes of fire deaths in the state. Smoking is third, with 17%. Heating is by far the leading cause of residential fires in New York State and these fires are increasing. This is not to say that we should lessen our efforts; careless smoking still is a cause of fires.

We would be pleased to furnish additional details on any of the above items.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard E. Scanlan", written in dark ink on a white background.

Richard E. Scanlan

RES/prp
Attachment