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EPA REPORT CRITICIZED IN ANNAPOLIS HEARING

Scientists and legal scholars urge Delegates to be cautious of EPA's "science" when considering Clean Indoor Air Act

Annapolis, MD – Critical testimony from prominent scientists and legal scholars about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's report on environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) was heard today in the House of Delegates' Environmental Matters Committee.

The Committee is hearing testimony on the re-introduction of H1572, the so-called "Clean Indoor Air Act" that was defeated in the Maryland Assembly last year and re-introduced in February 1993, after the EPA released its report on ETS. The proposed bill would ban smoking in all enclosed public places and worksites, including restaurants and private businesses.

Today, Dr. Gio Batta Gori, former director of the Smoking and Health Program at the National Cancer Institute and current president of the International Society of Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology, expressed concern about the scientific validity of the EPA report which has prompted reconsideration of a public smoking ban: "Three categories of exposure can be identified in the epidemiological studies on ETS. One group considers people exposed to ETS at work, and indicates no overall increase in lung cancer risk. This absence of overall risk for workplace exposures should be of special interest to this committee.

"A second exposure category addresses people exposed to ETS at home since childhood, and the combined risk estimate from all studies also reports no overall increase of lung cancer risk. The EPA simply did not consider the data from these and the negative workplace studies in its risk assessment.

"A third category of exposure in some 30 studies from all over the world concerns nonsmoking wives of smoking husbands. Of these studies, some reported a small increase in risk, some no risk change at all, and some actually reported a decrease in risk." Dr. Gori also noted that the EPA deviated from accepted statistical standards and ignored data from two important U.S. studies that also reported no overall increase in risk.

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