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The termination of the EPA's tobacco research program occurred two years ago. The decision to halt the program was not widely known. Critics said the release of the lung cancer report prompted them to speak out.

Until the end of 1990, the agency conducted experiments on cigarette smoke as part of its indoor air research program. The program was one of the largest federal research efforts on the health effects of secondhand smoke, said the EPA's Peter Preuss.

The program conducted basic research. It was not directly connected to the EPA division that prepares risk assessments, such as the one being released today.

EPA officials denied they acted in response to industry lobbying. "I can tell you categorically that there was no industry pressure that I knew of," said Erich Brethauer, assistant administrator for research and development.

Preuss said the research was dropped because the agency had completed its central aims and wanted to move to other pollutants.

The research program was doing much work on the effects of secondhand smoke in children. "All of that work has been killed," said an EPA scientist who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"It's outrageous that the EPA has terminated funding of the most important indoor air pollutant," Glantz said. "The EPA had one of the best research programs in the world."

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NC Secondhand Smoke-Reax, N.C. Bjt,420 N.C. Could Be Open To Legal Action Following EPA Smoking Report

GREENSBORO (AP) In North Carolina, one of only four states with no statewide law limiting public smoking, state government could be left open to legal action following a report on secondhand smoke.

Such a lawsuit could be filed, for example, by a non-smoker who gets cancer or some other disease that physicians link to secondhand smoke, anti-smoking activists told the News & Record of Greensboro.

"States are on notice," said Peter Schwedock, a Miami lawyer who is pressing a massive class-action suit against America's cigarette manufacturers.

"The courts are going to force damages on various groups, including individuals who smoke, businesses that permit it and

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