

Peña offers counterproposal on smoking

By Kevin Flynn

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Mayor Federico Peña yesterday delivered a counterproposal to the tobacco industry on the issue of smoking lounges at Stapleton International Airport, giving the industry until noon Monday to respond.

The tobacco lobby, battling Peña's executive order to ban nearly all smoking at Stapleton by New Year's Day — and entirely at the new airport — said it would have a response by the deadline.

"We need to know by then whether we need to take down signs and remove ash trays," the mayor said.

Peña would not reveal his counterproposal, which deals with financing the construction of separately ventilated smoking lounges at the airport. The mayor opposes using public funds for that.

The industry has said it would help finance the work, but it questions the city's \$1.7 million estimate for the job.

"As of today, the executive order is still in effect," said Peña, dodging the question of whether he would delay the order if the industry's response wasn't sufficient.

The industry has proposed putting off the order for 30 days while it negotiates with the city. In turn, the industry would not lobby in

that time for final passage of a city council bill that would overturn Peña's order.

"We will have a response to the mayor by 11:30 Monday," said Kathryn Works, a lobbyist for Philip Morris Co.

The council bill is scheduled for a public hearing Wednesday evening. Council president Cathy Donohue urged the two sides to compromise before then.

"If you listen to the phone calls we're getting, they're just rabid on both sides," Donohue said. "The last public hearing we had like this, I broke the glass on my desk with the gavel. I don't want to break it again."