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NEWS RELEASE

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City of Firebaugh Bans Smoking in Multi-Unit Housing Complexes

On May 20, 2019, the City of Firebaugh became the first city in the San Joaquin Valley to pass a law that bans smoking and vaping tobacco and cannabis in multi-unit housing (MUH) complexes. This new law affects all multi-family buildings with two or more attached units including duplexes, apartments, condominiums, senior and assisted living and long-term health care facilities. The new policy prohibits smoking or vaping by tenants, guests, or staff in any apartment, common areas, or outdoor areas.

“Secondhand tobacco and cannabis smoke are a real issue for tenants and landlords alike,” says Dr. Rais Vohra, Fresno County Interim Health Officer. “It is impossible to contain the smoke from even a single tenant, to assure that it does not drift into hallways and neighboring apartments through vents, outlets, or even cracks in the walls. It is important to remember that even ‘minor’ exposure is enough to be a serious health risk for tenants with respiratory ailments, for children, the elderly, and for pets.”

The United States Surgeon General has concluded that eliminating smoking in indoor spaces is the only way to fully protect non-smokers from secondhand smoke exposure and that separating smokers from non-smokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot completely prevent secondhand smoke exposure.

Firebaugh Mayor, Dr. Marcia Sablan says, “The Firebaugh City Council took this step to protect the health and well-being of Firebaugh residents. This ordinance adds to the City’s previous ordinances requiring tobacco sales licenses and not allowing smoking in parks.”

Cities and counties in California have led the way on many secondhand smoke issues throughout the years by passing groundbreaking laws to restrict smoking. As of February 2019, 64 jurisdictions in California have adopted a strong law that prohibits smoking in multi-unit housing. “The City of Firebaugh has been, and continues to be, a leader in Fresno County to protect its residents from secondhand smoke exposure,” states Martha Zarate, Program Coordinator with the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission.

For additional information or to schedule an interview, please call Nasreen Johnson at (559) 230-9739. Resources for Firebaugh multi-unit housing owners/manager and tenants are available at https://firebaugh.org/smoke-free/.

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