

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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**Health Department Withdraws Proposed Regulations
for Fire Safety Standards for Cigarettes, as Major Companies Agree to Voluntary Action**

Baltimore, MD (March 14, 2008) – On October 10, 2007, the Baltimore City Health Department proposed regulations prohibiting sale in Baltimore City of any cigarettes not meeting the fire safety standard in advance of the state implementation date of July 1, 2008.

Since this proposal was made, three major cigarette manufacturers – Philip Morris USA, R.J. Reynolds, and Lorillard Tobacco Company – have agreed to meet the requirements of the proposed regulations voluntarily. The companies have notified the Health Department that cigarettes meeting the fire safety standard will be sold in Baltimore City months before State law requires such cigarettes, with new shipments of nearly all brands compliant by early April.

Therefore, the Health Department is withdrawing its proposed regulations; the purpose of the proposal has been largely met.

Cigarettes meeting the fire safety standard have a reduced propensity to burn when left unattended. Cigarettes not meeting this standard were related to over 500 fires in Baltimore City in the last eight years and the deaths of almost 50 people.

Because all cigarettes, even those that meet fire safety standards, pose serious health risks, the Health Department strongly encourages city residents to quit smoking altogether. Free counseling and nicotine replacement products are available at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

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