

Smoking on the Shore

In August 2012, the town council of Carolina Beach, N.C., passed a law banning smoking on the town's beach. The Town Council voted 4-1 on the issue, showing strong support for the ban among elected officials. Comments from Carolina Beach residents during a public hearing reflected a similar split: nine people spoke in favor of the ban, while two individuals advocated against.

Those in favor of the ban at the hearing voiced environmental and aesthetic concerns, citing the overwhelming clutter of discarded cigarette butts on the beach as damaging. They were also concerned about the air quality at the beach, especially in terms of the impact on families with young children.

Those who spoke against the ban felt that the ban was a severe intrusion on personal rights. Opponents also cited economic concerns, saying that the ban could deter tourists who smoked from visiting Carolina Beach. Ray Rothrock, mayor of Carolina Beach, advocated against the ban on the grounds that it was too extreme. He suggested strong litter laws instead.