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Lee Commissioners schedule public hearing on measure to prohibit smoking and vaping at parks and public beaches

Fort Myers, FL, June 3, 2025 – The Lee Board of County Commissioners voted Tuesday to schedule a public hearing at 9:30 a.m. June 17 to consider an ordinance amending Chapter 20 of the Lee County Code of Ordinances, Parks and Recreation, to prohibit smoking and vaping at county parks and public beaches.

Florida Statutes Section 386.209 has generally preempted the regulation of smoking to the state, with certain exceptions, including the ability for local governments to prohibit smoking at schools and indoor park facilities. The statute was amended in 2019 to further allow local governments to prohibit smoking and vaping at all county parks and public beaches. Unfiltered cigars are exempt under the statute.

If the Board approves the amendment, the ordinance will continue to be enforced by Lee County Parks & Recreation. Lee County Parks & Recreation rangers' primary focus is to ensure the safety of park visitors and protect the natural resources of Lee County's complex ecosystems and parklands. The rangers are considered "Ambassadors of the Park" and provide visitors with information regarding park activities and offer various educational programs. The rangers can, however, cite individuals who do not comply with ordinance. The fine schedule will continue to be \$100 for a first offense, \$200 for a second offense and \$300 for a third.

If approved by commissioners, the amendment to the ordinance will take effect upon being filed with the Florida Department of State.

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