



Public Health Institute Statement on Election Results for California State Propositions 21, 23 and 26

OAKLAND, CA (November 3, 2010) -- The Public Health Institute (PHI) is both pleased and disappointed at the results of three California state propositions in the November 2 election. While PHI is elated that California voters defeated Proposition 23, upholding the state's landmark air pollution and clean energy law, it is disappointed that voters opposed a proposition to protect parks and passed another that makes it more difficult for state and local governments to assess or raise fees. PHI will actively participate in assessing, analyzing and measuring the implications of the results of these measures.

Proposition 23

PHI was heartened by the defeat of Proposition 23. The measure would have suspended the state law that requires greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced to 1990 levels by the year 2020. "Voters reaffirmed their commitment to clean air standards," said Mary A. Pittman, DrPH, president and CEO of PHI. "Air pollution caused by the burning of fossil fuels is a serious public health problem in California, contributing to asthma and other respiratory illnesses, hospitalizations and premature deaths. Proposition 23 would have effectively repealed groundbreaking regulations to reduce greenhouse gases that harm health and play a major role in climate change. Its defeat should be welcomed by all Californians."

Proposition 21

California's state parks are crucial resources that help Californians and their families live active, healthy lives. At a time of heightened concern about the obesity epidemic, we need to ensure that these valuable outdoor spaces are preserved for future generations, and that's why we supported Proposition 21. "Obviously, we would have liked to see Proposition 21 approved by voters, and we believe this campaign has already accomplished something positive," Pittman said. "It's clear to us now that more Californians are beginning to understand the value of our state parks, and we look forward to continuing our work to find a way to protect this vital natural resource for our state."

Passage of Proposition 21 would have assured that California's 278 state parks and beaches remain open, well maintained and a diverse resource for all Californians to be physically active.

Proposition 26

Regarding Proposition 26, California voters faced a critical decision about the ability of their local and state governments to continue to protect the public's health. Supported by big tobacco, alcohol and oil interests, Proposition 26 significantly limits the power of local and state governments to assess or increase fees used to mitigate the harm these and other industries cause local communities. State and local governments depend on a

variety of fees to stay afloat. With the passage of Proposition 26, fees will be treated as taxes and require a two-thirds vote from the electorate to raise them. This proposition threatens the ability of state and local governments to respond to emerging public health needs.

“There are many unanswered legal and policy questions,” Pittman said. “It is almost certain that there will be legal challenges as the measure takes effect.”

With our partners, PHI is committed to leading a dialogue regarding the impact of Proposition 26 and to preparing and delivering models, tools and strategies that will help public health leaders mitigate and overcome the restrictions established by the measure.

About the Public Health Institute

PHI is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting health, social justice, well-being and quality of life. PHI’s approach to public health is grounded in the recognition that a complex web of factors contributes to health problems like cancer, poor nutrition, violence, asthma or AIDS, and that all institutions and sectors play integral roles in promoting healthy choices and creating healthy environments. To learn more about the Public Health Institute, visit www.phi.org.