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SPORTS EXTRA

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Bloomy's Butt-Tax: Blinded by the Smoke

•It will be time to kick the habit of raising cigarette taxes when we can save the lives of the 10,000 New Yorkers who die from smoking-related diseases annually ("Promises, Up in Smoke," Editorial, Jan. 30).

With 35,000 youths who pick up the deadly addiction each year, the increased cigarette tax is not about profiting off the vices of others, it's about preventing kids from consuming a deadly product.

Teens are price-sensitive and will think twice before buying an expensive pack of smokes.

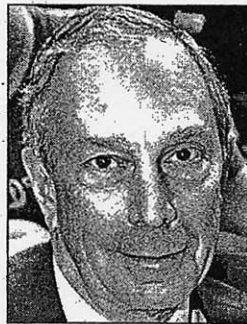
A tax that helps stop kids from starting to smoke and saves taxpayer dollars and lives is a tax that deserves all of our support.

Louise A. Vetter
CEO
American Lung
Association
of the City of New York
Manhattan

•The Post is right to state that the "addiction to a cigarette tax is unhealthy."

Of course, the anti-smoking crowd loves to stick it to the smokers, who are supposed to

THE ISSUE: Mayor Bloomberg's proposal to raise cigarette taxes by 50 cents a pack.



Mayor Bloomberg

I have a proposal: How about a 50-cent tax on every bagel sold in New York City? It could be a graduated tax, costing more for a schmear.

I bet that would ruffle some feathers.

Jeff Upton
Brodheads ville, Pa.

•As a smoker, I'm glad I don't live in New York. If Mayor Bloomberg keeps raising the taxes, smokers will simply have to buy their cigarettes from drug dealers.

In Belgium, you can already get contraband cigarettes for a dollar a

Bloomberg is not above the law of supply and demand.

Smokers are not going away, we'll simply adapt. We'll grow our own tobacco in our apartments and even buy cigarette wrappers separately.

Maybe some smokers will quit and become alcoholics, or the Nicotrol inhaler will become popular.

But the people in New York City can be sure of one thing, you will not get all of our tobacco taxes, and we're not quitting just because you want us to.

Hershel Goldberg
Miami Beach, Fla.

•Why doesn't Bloomberg put a \$3.50 tax on wine, gasoline or chocolate-fudge ice cream if he's so concerned about our health?

I like my vices and don't need his concern.

I will double my efforts to buy my smokes out of state, the city will lose out and so will the guy in my local deli.

Ken MacMillan