

# Attorney General says state can ban smoking in Indian casinos

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal says in a legal opinion that the state can expand its smoking ban to Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos.

In 2003, lawmakers banned smoking in bars and restaurants, but not in private clubs or the casinos. The state Supreme Court last year upheld that ban despite protests from bar and restaurant owners who claimed it is unconstitutional and hurts their businesses.

State lawmakers are being asked this session to pass a bill that would ban smoking in all areas of the casinos that covered by state liquor laws.

That would include bars and restaurants, but it's not clear whether it would extend to gaming tables and slot machines where drinks are served.

Tribal authorities say they have jurisdiction over the issue and reject state involvement.

Blumenthal says in a formal legal opinion Thursday that extending the ban would hold up in court, but it would be better for lawmakers to reach an agreement with the tribes that run the casinos.