

# Bali Daily

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## Tourist industry lauds tobacco fair ban

BY FIKRI ZAKI MUHAMMADI ON 2014-02-12

Despite losing a potential market, the Indonesian Hotels and Restaurants Association (PHRI) lauded the local administration's persistence in banning the 2014 Inter-tabac ASIA tobacco fair from being held on the island.

Tjokorda Oka Artha Ardhana Sukawati, head of the Bali chapter of PHRI, praised the province's stance, saying that the decision showed the administration's consistency to get the island cigarette-free.

"The event would certainly have added to our occupancy rate," Ardhana told Bali Daily on Monday. "But we accept the reasons. Bali has a productive bylaw that bans smoking and it must be upheld."

Ardhana said that the tourist industry, particularly the meeting, incentive, conference and exhibition (MICE) business, would get a larger market of "non-smokers" due to the banning of the event.

"We lose a small market, but show to the larger number of people who don't smoke that Bali wants to be cigarette-free. This may be an added value to foreign tourists, thus attracting more of them," he said.

Ardhana expressed hopes that the administration would remain consistent with its stance to have the island totally free from smoking in public places.

The administration's ban on hosting the international trade fair for tobacco products and smoking accessories was in response to mounting opposition from health practitioners and the public.

The fair was to be held on Feb. 27-28 in Nusa Dua. The province said the event ran counter to the provincial smoke-free bylaw and complicated ongoing attempts to enforce it.

Bali Deputy Governor Ketut Sudikerta said he had sent a letter to the organizing committee regarding the rejection.

Enacted in 2011, the smoke-free bylaw clears the way to banning smoking across broad swathes of the island. The bylaw states that hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, places of worship, healthcare facilities, schools, playgrounds, traditional and modern markets, transportation terminals, airports, government offices and public transportation were to be smoke-free areas.

Bali had already rejected the World Tobacco Asia (WTA) conference, slated for September this year in Nusa Dua, which was finally diverted to Jakarta.

Rejection of the plan was not just local. A petition signed by health professionals from Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Timor Leste, the US and Vietnam stated: "We respectfully request the government of the Republic of Indonesia and the provincial government of Bali to prohibit Inter-tabac Asia from being held in Bali, and to prohibit the German-based Inter-tabac from promoting tobacco products in Indonesia."

The petition, posted online on change.org, had generated more than 12,000 signatures by Tuesday. It demanded that the organizer, German-based Westfalenhallen Dortmund GmbH and mayor to the city of Dortmund, Ullrich Sierau, cancel the planned event.

Sierau has reportedly rejected the petition.

Petition initiators Max Vollmer of Germany and Yosef Rabindanata Nugraha of Indonesia tried to present the petition to the mayor at Dortmund City Hall on Feb. 3 but the mayor refused to receive it. It was reported that several officials blocked the two from giving the petition directly to the mayor by threatening to call the police.

“I’m very disappointed. The Dortmund mayor has shown his disrespect for his own people. I, as an Indonesian citizen who represents thousands of Indonesian people who have signed the petition, am very disappointed with the Dortmund mayor’s attitude,” said Yosef in a statement made available to The Jakarta Post on Tuesday.

Most recently, the petition was reportedly received by Dortmund Deputy Mayor Manfred Sauer, who promised to convey it to the mayor.