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MEDIA ALERT

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Sale of Novelty Lighters to Juveniles Prohibited on July 1

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA: – Governor Tim M. Kaine has signed House Bill 2578 prohibiting the sale of novelty lighters to persons under the age of 18. Virginia is the 18th state to enact novelty lighter legislation. The new legislation goes into effect July 1.

The bill, sponsored by Delegate Algie T. Howell, Jr., is designed to prevent lighters that look like toys from getting into the hands of children. The bill makes selling a novelty lighter to anyone under 18 punishable by fine of up to \$100. It also requires stores to keep the lighters out of the reach of children.

“The Virginia fire service community is excited about the new legislation because it will better protect children and families from these dangerous devices that are often disguised as toys,” said W.G. Shelton, Jr., Executive Director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

Toylike or novelty lighters have features that are attractive to children. For this reason, they have been responsible for injuries, deaths, and accidents across the nation because children are tempted to play with them despite being taught that handling lighters is dangerous.

For more information about novelty lighters, visit http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/fireservice/subjects/arson/08arson_awareness.shtm. For tips to prevent fire play with matches and lighters, visit http://www.vafire.com/fire_safety_education/tipsheets1/specialpop-children.pdf.

About VDFP

The Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP) provides support services to approximately 797 fire and emergency service organizations and over 70,000 firefighters in the Commonwealth. Support areas include funding, professional development, public fire and life safety education/awareness, research, operational support, advocacy, and technical assistance. For more information on VDFP, please click [here](#).

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