In a surprise move, the Lafayette City-Parish council votes down an anti-smoking measure.

Bar and club patrons in Lafayette can continue to light up the night.

Despite pleas to protect workers from second-hand smoke and despite support from the Downtown Lafayette Bar and Restaurant Association, the Lafayette City-Parish Council voted Tuesday against banning smoking in clubs and bars. "It's a sad day in Lafayette," Grammy-winning artist Chubby Carrier said. "I'm in shock."

For several years Carrier has pushed for a smoking ban in bars and clubs. The vote will hurt Lafayette because many of his fans elsewhere in the country would like to see him play in Lafayette, but won't because of the smoke.

Jules Gaudin, who lost his non-smoking wife to lung cancer last year after years of dancing at area clubs, said he was disappointed with the vote. Gaudin, who is originally from New Orleans, said he was proud of his native city's leaders for having the strength to ban smoking in its bars, clubs and casinos.

Lafayette could suffer because some tourists won't visit the city's clubs because of this decision. "It's so sad they wouldn't make a decision to prevent disease and death," he said.

The council voted 5-4 against a ban on the smoking of cigarettes, cigars, pipes, hookahs and electronic smoking devices or e-cigarettes in bars, clubs, expanded service restaurants and gaming facilities.

Voting against the ban were Councilmen Jared Bellard, Andy Naquin, Don Bertrand, Keith Patin and William Theriot.

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smoking in restaurants it was encouraged by some restaurant owners who “didn’t want to be the bad guy,” City-Parish President Joey Durel said.

Durel said he bet the same conversation was held decades ago about requiring seat belts in cars. “My wife is alive” because they passed a law, he said.

Others shared tales about their own battles with cancer or those of loved ones attributed to smoking or second-hand smoke.

Josef Butts read a statement on behalf of musician David Eagan who had not smoked for eight years when he was first diagnosed with cancer.

He was cancer-free in 2004, but it came back in 2014 and 2015, this time with a rare mutation.

“I can hardly sit at my beloved piano” for more than a few minutes, Eagan wrote.

Speaking for himself, Butts said musicians don’t have the ability to choose where they work. They need to work where they can earn money. That includes servers, waitresses and hostesses, he said.

“I think places of employment are compelled to protect their workers against known risks,” he said.

Councilman Kevin Naquin of Kevin Naquin and the Ossun Playboys said he was against the smoking ban two weeks ago. But he researched and received calls from constituents and met with fellow musicians like Chubby Carrier and changed his mind.

Naquin said he has a college degree and a full-time job so he’s in a financial position to refuse to play in venues that allow smoking. Not everyone is in that position, he said.

Theriot said government should not tell businesses what they can do with their business. The smoking ban takes away individual freedoms and liberties, he said.

The New Orleans City Council in January banned smoking in bars and casinos. That ban became effective in April.

The state of Louisiana banned smoking in many public places in 2007, including restaurants and most workplaces, but exempted bars and gaming facilities like casinos.