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February 23, 2012

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association
646 N. Robertson Blvd.
West Hollywood, CA 90069

RE: Distribution of cigarettes in goodie bags and on the patio at the Golden Globe awards

Dear Sir or Madam:

We are writing this letter with great concern about the distribution of free cigarettes in goodie bags, and outside on the patio at the 2012 Golden Globes Awards ceremony. It was widely reported that free Parliament cigarettes were freely distributed at the event this year. Smoking is a major public health concern in our state and our nation. We take the distribution of free tobacco products anywhere very seriously. The fact that this distribution occurred at a nationally televised event makes us even more concerned. We are writing to you to understand why this happened, and to express our strong wish to you that nothing like this is repeated in the future.

Tobacco kills approximately 400,000 people in the United States each year, more Americans than AIDS, alcohol, drug abuse, car crashes, murders, suicides, and fires combined. The distribution of free cigarettes makes an extremely addictive and destructive product easily available. This might encourage non-smokers to start smoking. It also discourages smokers from quitting or may cause a relapse in a smoker who has quit. Most importantly, it creates an environment where smoking is considered socially acceptable and perhaps even glamorous. Young fans are influenced by the smoking behavior of celebrities whether on or off-screen.

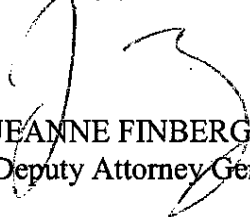
Not only is giving away free cigarettes harmful to public health, it is also against the law in many instances. Since we do not know all of the details of the giveaway, we can't be sure which legal provision applies, but we can assure you there are many possibilities. First of all, it is illegal for any manufacturer, retailer or distributor to give away cigarettes under the federal Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, (Public Law 111-31; 123 Stat. 1776, enacted June 22, 2009). California law also severely restricts free sampling of cigarettes by manufacturers, distributors and retailers.

Please tell us who suggested that you give away cigarettes at the event, and where you obtained the Parliaments that were distributed. We wrote to Altria, the manufacturer of Parliaments, (letter enclosed), and they have assured us that they were not involved in providing the cigarette samples. Who was?

In addition, it is a crime under California law for **anyone** to give away cigarettes to minors. (Penal Code section 308.) We assume that the event was primarily meant for adults, but we do understand that actors under the age of 18 were in attendance.

As you can see we take this issue very seriously. Please send us the information we requested about this distribution and assure us that there will be no distribution of any tobacco products at Golden Globe events in the future. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We hope to hear from you by March 9, 2012.

Sincerely yours,



JEANNE FINBERG
Deputy Attorney General

For KAMALA D. HARRIS
Attorney General

JF:td
Encl.