

Would You Want to Smell BBQ All the Time?

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The New York Times:

CITY COUNCIL meetings in Austin, Tex., tend to be droning, low-drama affairs, but that wasn't the case earlier this month when barbecue was on the agenda: specifically, the smell of barbecue and a proposal to control it, in response to some citizen complaints.

The suggestion that a smell some would dab behind their ears if possible should be mitigated by special exhaust systems called smoke-scrubbers provoked local outrage, with opponents accusing the complainers of being from California (in Texas, that's not a compliment).

But that's the thing about smells. One person's putrid is another person's pleasant, and local governments around the country are having a hard time regulating what's in the olfaction of the beholder.

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"The smell becomes highly offensive because of the distress of being exposed against your free will," said Rachel Herz, a psychologist and neuroscientist at Brown University and author of "The Scent of Desire: Discovering Our Enigmatic Sense of Smell." "It's similar to your neighbor blaring a song you once liked loudly and constantly."

Read the whole story: [*The New York Times*](#)