



**PRESS RELEASE  
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## **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONTINUES ITS QUEST TO MAKE IT HARDER FOR SMOKERS TO QUIT**

*Nicotine concentration limits and flavour restrictions are a one-two punch  
for Canadian vapers and smokers*

**Montreal, Quebec – June 23, 2021** – Last week the Government of Canada announced a ban on the sale of flavoured vaping products, this week it continued its campaign to limit reduced harm\* nicotine choices to vapers and smokers by announcing changes to vaping regulations that will cap the concentration of nicotine in vapour products sold in Canada.

“This is nothing more than punitive and excessive regulations. Vapour products have played a significant role in recent years in reducing smoking rates in Canada. We should be maintaining the level of choice, not limiting choice,” said Eric Gagnon Vice President, Corporate and Regulatory Affairs for Imperial Tobacco Canada. “It’s as if the Government of Canada is trying to discourage smokers from switching to vaping and encourage vapers to start smoking. It truly is mind boggling.”

Vaping is recognized as a less harmful alternative to smoking by many credible health groups, including Health Canada<sup>1</sup>, Public Health England<sup>2</sup>, and Public Health France<sup>3</sup>, and one of the most effective tools to help people that want to quit smoking<sup>4</sup>.

For vaping products to achieve their full harm reduction potential, it is imperative that consumers have access to different flavours as most want to get away from the tobacco taste<sup>5</sup>. In addition, there is a segment of consumers who want high nicotine products. Smokers often start with higher level nicotine products and as time goes by reduce the level. In jurisdictions

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1 Vaping and quitting smoking - Canada.ca

2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/phe-publishes-independent-expert-e-cigarettes-evidence-review>

3 cigarette électronique (tabac-info-service.fr)

4 [https://www.ncsct.co.uk/usr/pub/Electronic\\_cigarettes.\\_A\\_briefing\\_for\\_stop\\_smoking\\_services.pdf](https://www.ncsct.co.uk/usr/pub/Electronic_cigarettes._A_briefing_for_stop_smoking_services.pdf)

5 Friedman, A., Xu, SQ. (2020). Associations of Flavoured e-Cigarette Uptake With Subsequent Smoking Initiation and Cessation. JAMA Netw Open 3(6):e203826. doi: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.3826.

\*Based on the weight of evidence and assuming a complete switch from cigarette smoking. These products are not risk free and are addictive

that have already introduced severe restrictions, like Nova Scotia, the data suggest cigarette sales have increased<sup>6</sup>.

“The reality is that many smokers are looking for a reduced harm alternative to smoking that satisfies them, and flavours and nicotine levels play a significant role,” said Mr. Gagnon. “Isn’t it the government’s duty to provide a harm reduced product that satisfies these needs so these consumers don’t go back to smoking?”

Canada has announced that it wants to reduce smoking prevalence to less than 5 percent by 2035. Yet, it is going to great lengths to hinder vapour products from achieving their full potential in helping smokers switch to a less risky alternative. Limiting the choice of smokers and vapers will only drive consumers to cigarettes.

These regulations have been put in place under the guise of reducing youth vaping levels. Our position is clear: youth should not vape or smoke, period. Imperial Tobacco Canada recognizes some youth are vaping and that it must be addressed. However, many anti-tobacco health lobby groups have used the current situation to push their anti-tobacco industry agenda and request excessive and inappropriate vaping regulation.

“Many activists are using the argument of youth vaping to advance their moralistic agenda on tobacco and nicotine which will do nothing to curb youth consumption,” said Mr. Gagnon. “We all agree youth should not vape or smoke. But let’s talk science, fact, and evidence. Let’s have a balanced and rational debate. We are discouraged by these restrictions that will only serve to further penalize adult consumers looking for a safer way to consume nicotine.”

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<sup>6</sup> 8Matt Brand, *Cigarette Sales Increasing in Atlantic Canada*, *Halifax Today* <https://www.halifaxtoday.ca/local-news/cigarette-sales-in-nova-scotia-increasing-atlantic-convenience-stores-association-2792516> , October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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