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## **Canadian industry leader is shut out of parliamentary process, but continues to campaign for evidence-based decision making**

*After being denied an invitation to speak at public consultations, Imperial Tobacco Canada shares its message with public and government via press conference on Parliament Hill*

**OTTAWA, FEBRUARY 26, 2018** – Canadian lawmakers are poised to introduce an ineffective policy that is likely to result in unintended negative consequences. This was the main message delivered at a press conference held today on Parliament Hill by Canada’s largest legal tobacco manufacturer, Imperial Tobacco Canada. The remarks coincided with the House of Commons’ public consultations on Bill S-5, which will legalize and regulate vaping products, as well as standardize and remove branding from tobacco packaging (contrary to Canada’s regulatory approach for cannabis).

Plain packaging laws have been introduced in Australia and France, and government evidence shows that their smoking rates have not declined. “Our government has explicitly modeled a bill on examples passed in Australian and France, even though their governments admit that their laws have failed,” said Eric Gagnon, Head of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs at Imperial Tobacco Canada.<sup>1</sup> “Health Canada is ignoring clear evidence that plain packaging has never lowered smoking rates, and incentivizes the consumption of illegal tobacco.”

Illegal tobacco represents 20%-25% of the cigarette market in Canada, and is blamed for upward of \$2 billion in lost taxes annually. “Bill S-5 prohibits legal manufacturers from differentiating their products from those of the illegal industry; it will be impossible for consumers and law enforcement to identify what’s legal and what’s not”, added Mr. Gagnon. “The government recognizes the importance of branding to defeat the black market with respect to cannabis, and it flies in the face of evidence and reason that this principle is not being applied to curtail illegal tobacco.”

Mr. Gagnon stated that Imperial Tobacco supports the government’s efforts to legalize vaping products, though is concerned that Bill S-5 will restrict communications that inform consumers of lowered risk

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<sup>1</sup> The Australian Government, which introduced plain packaging in December 2012, has stated that “for the first time in over two decades, the daily smoking rate did not significantly decline over the most recent 3 year period (2013 to 2016)” (<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/illicit-use-of-drugs/ndshs-2016-key-findings/contents/highlights-from-the-2016-survey>), while France’s Health Minister has stated that “We know that plain packaging does not lead smokers to stop smoking” ( <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cri/2017-2018/20180075.asp#P1117763>).

potential. Health experts consistently state that vaping products can have a beneficial impact on public health, and a 2018 report by Public Health England concludes that these devices are at least 95 per cent less harmful than traditional cigarettes.<sup>2</sup> “It is crucial that the federal government ensures adult smokers are aware of the evidence and have the ability to make an informed choice regarding their use of less-risky products,” concluded Gagnon.

Please [click here](#) to access the ITCAN submission to HESA and all other supporting documents to this press conference.

**WEBCAST:** The press conference is being streamed live on the web and archived at the following address: [www.livestream.com/pressroom](http://www.livestream.com/pressroom).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-cigarettes-and-heated-tobacco-products-evidence-review/evidence-review-of-e-cigarettes-and-heated-tobacco-products-2018-executive-summary>