SUPREME COURT OF CANADA LETS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFF THE HOOK IN TOBACCO LAWSUITS

DESPITE TODAY’S JUDGEMENT, IMPERIAL TOBACCO CANADA INTENDS TO SHARE THE STORY OF HOW THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE THE SENIOR PARTNER OF THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Montreal, Quebec, Friday July 29, 2011 – Imperial Tobacco Canada is disappointed that the Supreme Court of Canada overruled the B.C. Court of Appeal’s decision to include the federal government as a third party in two high-profile tobacco lawsuits.

"Unfortunately, the Supreme Court of Canada has decided that the federal government is not accountable for its decisions and actions," said Donald McCarty, Imperial Tobacco Canada’s Vice President of Law. "We nonetheless intend to set the record straight and believe it is important for the government of Canada to answer for its long and sustained involvement in the tobacco industry."

In 2009, the B.C. Court of Appeal granted Imperial Tobacco Canada the right to include the federal government as a third party in a class action suit against the company to recover the money spent by smokers on “light” or “mild” cigarettes and in the B.C. government’s attempt to recover health care costs from the industry. Today, the Supreme Court of Canada denied this right by overruling this previous judgement and decided that the government of Canada can do no wrong.

"The federal government has known about the risks associated with smoking for decades and they have instigated and promoted the development and sale of "light and mild" products in Canada” added Mr. McCarty. “It is astounding that the government of Canada can step away from its responsibilities and leave tobacco producers to bear the full brunt of these allegations, when it has been fully complicit in all aspects of the manufacturing and marketing of tobacco products for decades,” he concluded.

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Media Contacts:
Eric Gagnon
Manager, External Affairs
Tel: (514) 932-6161, ext. 2113
www.imperialtobaccocanada.com