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## **National Non-Smoking Week: Health Canada must embrace harm reduction and next generation products**

Imperial Tobacco Canada believes that by providing high quality innovative products, smokers will make the choice to switch to potentially less harmful alternatives.

**MONTREAL – January 22, 2018** – As the country marks National Non-Smoking Week, Imperial Tobacco Canada believes that by embracing the principles of harm reduction, Health Canada can allow smokers to choose other alternatives, such as vaping products and tobacco heating products, and achieve the goal of reducing Canada’s smoking rate to less than five percent ahead of the target date of 2035.

Tobacco Heating Products (THPs) and vaping products are battery-powered devices that do not use combustion to deliver nicotine, with the consumer instead inhaling vapour, not smoke. The vast majority of toxicants in cigarette emissions are the product of combustion, and with no combustion, the result is far fewer toxicants. A report by the UK Royal College of Physicians states that because “most of the harm caused by smoking arises not from nicotine but from other components of tobacco smoke, the health and life expectancy of today’s smokers could be radically improved by encouraging as many as possible to switch to a smoke-free source of nicotine.”<sup>1</sup>

“In order to provide smokers with options between cigarettes and other alternatives – with no combustion and therefore potentially less risk – it is essential that Canada introduces regulations that can communicate their harm reduction potential,” explains Eric Gagnon, Head of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs, Imperial Tobacco Canada. “With a reasonable and sustainable regulatory framework that supports harm reduction and next generation products, the federal government can reduce the public health impact of tobacco.”

Nicotine-containing vaping products are currently illegal in Canada unless approved by Health Canada. None of the products currently in the Canadian market have been approved, which makes them all illegal. Bill S-5, which is currently before the House of Commons, seeks to legalize and introduce a regulatory framework for vaping products. The Bill’s resulting regulations will have a significant impact on smokers who may choose to migrate from traditional cigarettes to smoke-free products.

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<sup>1</sup> Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and Electronic Non-Nicotine Delivery Systems, a report by the World Health Organisation, August 2016.

Some governments, including that of the UK, have already taken a pragmatic approach to some of these new products and are actively providing smokers with proper information.

“As part of the world’s largest and most international tobacco and nicotine company, we understand the complex needs of smokers, and this is why our company has invested more than US \$2.5 billion since 2012 to develop a range of Next Generation Products (NGPs) such as vapour and tobacco heating products,” says Gagnon. “It is crucial that the federal government changes its current approach toward NGPs to allow adult smokers to choose potentially less harmful products if they wish.”

The expiry of the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy in March 2018 presents an additional opportunity for the federal government to recognize harm reduction principles in achieving its five per cent goal instead of adding more radical and ineffective control measures on tobacco products that only serve to fuel the further growth of illicit tobacco. “To lower the smoking rate, Canada should focus its efforts on building consumer awareness of less-risky alternatives to smoking, and crack down on the illegal tobacco industry that continues to grow and supplies more than 20 per cent of the market with unregulated and untaxed cigarettes,” says Gagnon.

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