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IMPERIAL TOBACCO CANADA CALLS FOR BALANCED VAPING REGULATIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

IMPERIAL TOBACCO CANADA URGES THE BC GOVERNMENT TO ACT ON FACT NOT FEAR

Montreal, Quebec – January 24, 2020 – In its response to British Columbia’s proposed new vaping regulations, Imperial Tobacco Canada encourages the province to review the latest facts and evidence as it determines the best regulatory approach that will allow vapour products to reach their full harm reduction potential while these products are not used by minors.

“The potential for vaping products to contribute to tobacco harm reduction in British Columbia is greater than any other cessation product to have ever hit the market,” said Eric Gagnon, Head of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs at Imperial Tobacco Canada. “In order for vapour products to reach their full potential it is imperative that smokers are able to learn the facts about these products, are able to access them in the places where they purchase their cigarettes, and are able to buy and consume products that satisfy their needs.”

Today marks the close of British Columbia’s consultation on the province’s proposals as outlined in its *Vapour Products Intentions Paper*. Imperial Tobacco Canada has filed a detailed response to the proposals. The company believes that the proposals outlined in the Intentions Paper are for the most part extreme, illogical, not grounded in science and, if enacted, would involve an unconstitutional exercise of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council’s power to make regulations.

“Let me be clear, we support constitutional, reasonable and evidence-based regulation, especially measures aimed at keeping tobacco and vaping products out of the hands of minors,” said Mr. Gagnon. “Our submission cites sources, studies and research on vaping. We ask the Government of British Columbia to carefully examine the facts and not succumb to fear-based and erroneous claims.”

Imperial Tobacco Canada's main points in its submission are:

- Legislation should reflect the reduced risk profile of vaping products and their potential to help public health authorities achieve their goal of reducing smoking by providing adult smokers with what many have identified as a less risky alternative to cigarettes.
- For adult smokers to have a chance to access this alternative, manufacturers and retailers need to be able to properly communicate the features and advantages of vaping products in locations where smokers are present. The most obvious such locations are retail establishments where smokers purchase cigarettes.
- The current evidence does not substantiate claims that flavoured vaping products cause youth to start vaping. The current evidence does, however, demonstrate the importance of flavours to adult smokers wishing to switch completely to vaping. Restricting flavours would have a clear negative impact on the appeal of vaping products to smokers seeking to quit smoking.
- A 20 mg/mL limit is not appropriate for smokers who are used to higher nicotine delivery from their preferred cigarettes and is significantly less than the current federal limit of 66 mg/mL.
- Plain packaging sends the erroneous message to smokers that vaping is just as bad for their health as smoking, a message which could lead to their long-term continued use of tobacco.

The Company also provided some recommendations that would achieve a balance between keeping vapour products accessible to adults who are looking for an alternative to cigarettes and youth prevention:

- Severe penalties should be imposed for selling tobacco or vaping products to those under 19.
- Online sales of tobacco or vaping products should be regulated to ensure sales destined for minors do not take place.
- Provisions regulating vaping products should not go beyond the provisions of the federal Tobacco and Vaping Products Act in terms of any restrictions on promotion, packaging, nicotine content, flavours or other product feature.

“For the last many months, we have seen stories that portrays vaping as a public health epidemic,” continued Mr. Gagnon. “As governments look to regulate vaping, we believe it is important to bring back the facts into the conversation and not give free rein to anti-tobacco groups as they spread inaccurate and misleading information about nicotine vaping.”

Further to Imperial Tobacco Canada's government submission, it has also launched a media campaign (www.factsnotfear.ca) that aims to clear the air around the current spread of misinformation surrounding vaping.

"This campaign is not about promoting vaping. That is the responsibility of health agencies and the government if they truly want to reduce smoking rates," concluded Mr. Gagnon. "We simply want Canadians to have the facts, and we hope that the Government of British Columbia will make informed and evidence-based decisions."

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For more information or interview requests, please contact:

Samiha Fariha
Torchia Communications
O: 416-341-9929 ext. 224
C: 647-268-6687
samiha@torchiacom.com

Jean-Nicolas Desjeunes
Torchia Communications
O: 514-288-8290 ext. 260
jnd@torchiacom.com