

Imperial Tobacco Canada presents its submission to Senate on Bill S-5

Company supports the harm reduction potential of vaping products and framework introduced by government, with some notable exceptions

Plain tobacco packaging and product standardization represent an unprecedented assault on commercial expression

Montreal, Quebec, April 6, 2017 – The plain packaging and product standardization aspects of the federal government’s proposal include unlawful and flawed positions and will be counterproductive in achieving its objectives. This is the position that Imperial Tobacco Canada will take in its presentation today to the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology.

Bill S-5, which would amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-Smokers’ Health Act and would make consequential amendments to other acts, was introduced in the Senate last November and combines two public policy initiatives in one piece of legislation: the legislative framework for vaping products, and the further regulation of tobacco products through provisions enabling the introduction of plain packaging and cigarette standardization.

“While we support the government’s public health objectives related to reducing the harm of cigarette consumption, we believe measures such as packaging and product standardization are counterproductive to the government’s stated objectives,” explained Eric Gagnon, Head of Corporate and External Affairs, Imperial Tobacco Canada. “These measures represent an unprecedented assault on commercial expression and wholesale expropriation of an industry’s brands and trademarks that cannot be justified.”

There is no reliable evidence that plain packaging will work and these measures have failed to deliver any of the anticipated benefits in Australia, the only country that has fully implemented plain packaging for any substantial length of time. Instead the policy has led to unintended consequences that are adversely impacting the public, businesses and government. There is no reason to believe that the result would be any different in Canada, especially given the nature and magnitude of its existing illicit tobacco product problems.

Through the standardization measures, Health Canada will provide a template for organized crime to flood the Canadian market with counterfeit products – and consumers, retailers and law enforcement will have no ability to distinguish legal from illegal products.

With respect to vaping products, Imperial Tobacco Canada supports the framework introduced by the government in Bill S-5 with some notable exceptions related to discouraging promotion through reference to harm reduction, but urges prompt enactment of appropriate regulations governing the manufacture of these products.

“Contrary to packaging and product standardization, there is a wealth of evidence suggesting that using e-cigarettes as an alternative to conventional cigarettes can have an impact on public health,” added Gagnon. “The proposed legislation must allow manufacturers and retailers the ability to communicate to consumers reliable substantiated evidence about those new products and their reduced risk and harm reduction potential.”

If the focus is truly public health, then the government should make the vaping products provisions of Bill S-5 the priority.

“If the government is committed to improving public health, it would acknowledge the harm reduction potential of vaping products as an alternative to conventional cigarettes, and prioritize the introduction of clear regulations around these products,” concludes Gagnon.

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To view Imperial Tobacco Canada’s written submission to the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology in regard to the federal government’s Tobacco and Vaping Products Act (Bill S-5), visit [this link](#).

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