



Smoke-Free Nova Scotia

Madame Chairperson, Members of the Law Amendment Committee:

My name is Krista McMullin. **As the President of Smoke Free Nova Scotia, I'm here to show support for Bill 60.** We're pleased with the amendments proposed to the Smoke-Free Places Act and the Tobacco Access Act as they take some important steps in protecting the health of all Nova Scotians and in particular our youth. **We'd also like to make some suggestions as to how the bill can be further enhanced.**

Smoke-Free Nova Scotia (SFNS) is a coalition of 28 health-related organizations committed to reduced use of tobacco industry products and their harms in Nova Scotia. For almost 40 years SFNS has advocated for evidence-based, comprehensive tobacco control strategies and legislation in Nova Scotia. Since 2000, Nova Scotia has been a leader in effective tobacco control legislation with other provinces, territories and countries following our lead. The opportunity for the Government to continue this leadership exists today.

For years, SFNS has worked with government, NGO's, community and the general public to fight the impact of 'Big Tobacco' in our society. Together, through a comprehensive approach of education, smoking cessation, policy and legislation, we have had great success in reducing smoking rates. But despite the gains we have made, tobacco use is still the leading cause of preventable death in Canada. Traditional cigarette smoking remains the most significant and preventable cause of chronic disease today. We know that smoking tobacco kills and millions of current smokers will die prematurely from their smoking unless they quit. This burden falls predominantly on the most disadvantaged in Canadian society.

It's especially the evidence regarding the significant and recent increased use of electronic cigarettes, waterpipes/hookah and flavoured tobacco products by children and youth that brings SFNS to support Bill 60.

Seeing adults using cigarettes normalizes smoking behaviour for youth. With their appearance mimicking that of regular cigarettes, E-cigarettes 'renormalize' smoking. They also increase the attractiveness of smoking behaviour to our youth.

Understandably this is a real concern to SFNS, as it is for parents, for the health care system and for government. If strong regulations are not put in place, E-cigarettes could become the 'gateway' to tobacco smoking and a lifetime addiction to nicotine.

If there wasn't a strong connection between e-cigarettes and conventional cigarettes why would the tobacco companies be buying e-cigarette companies? We know tobacco companies don't want people who smoke to quit but rather to continue to smoke their addictive product. At this point in time, there is not sufficient scientific evidence that supports e-cigarettes as a smoking cessation aid. In keeping with Health Canada advisory for Canadians not to use e-cigarettes and the World Health Organization's calling for strict regulation on e-cigarettes, **SFNS supports Bill 60 in that e-cigarettes should be banned in places where tobacco smoking is banned in Nova Scotia.**

According to the latest national study on flavoured tobacco and youth (by the Propel Centre for Population Health Impact-University of Waterloo), nearly half of all tobacco users in Grade 6-12 in Atlantic Canada are using flavoured tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes, (47%) in the previous days.

Waterpipe/hookah products are currently growing in popularity, especially amongst youth. Contrary to popular belief, cigarette smoke and waterpipe smoke contain many of the same harmful chemicals. The water in a waterpipe does not filter out these chemicals. Whether the materials being smoked using a waterpipe contain tobacco or not, they are emitting harmful chemicals into the air. There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

The notion that water pipe/hookah smoking is only a cultural tradition is incorrect. Many countries with a predominantly Muslim population (e.g. Turkey, Djibouti) have banned all waterpipe/hookah smoking in public and work places. Nearly half of all Nova Scotia tobacco users in grades 6-12 used flavoured tobacco. Of those who used waterpipes/hookah, 28% used flavoured waterpipe products. Waterpipe/hookah smoking provides an opportunity to gather and socialize with friends. Many youth who are too young to get into bars use this as an attractive option.

E-cigarettes, waterpipes/hookahs and their use will undermine efforts to eliminate smoking in Canada. However legislation in Nova Scotia on flavours will make e-cigarettes, waterpipes/hookahs much less appealing to youth. In previous years, there have been numerous studies done on tobacco advertising and the increased consumption that advertising has on youth. **It only makes sense that e-cigarettes and waterpipes/hookahs advertising be treated the same as conventional cigarettes by eliminating any point-of-sale promotion, sales to minors (youth under 19) and by keeping them out of view.**

For many years the Tobacco Industry has been flooding the market with “kiddy,” “candy” and alcohol flavoured tobacco. These products are clearly marketed toward our youth. The Centre for Disease Control’s Surgeon General report on *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults*, 2012 states the tobacco industry recruits ‘replacement smokers’ from youth and young adults. Tobacco marketing has the greatest impact on kids – the “replacement smokers” the industry needs for all the Nova Scotians who die every year from tobacco-related diseases. Let’s be clear here. Big Tobacco’s only interest is increased profits for their shareholders. They have little or no interest in the health of Nova Scotians.

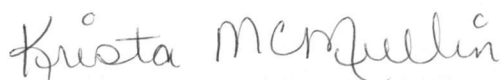
All tobacco products have flavoured options. This is including, but not limited to, tobacco papers, chewing tobacco, snus, snuff, e-juice, waterpipe/hookah, shisha, blunts, and so on. **It is important these products are included in the list of products covered by the ban on flavourings.**

Because it has been on the market for many years, people sometimes don’t think of menthol as a flavour. However it really is the ‘flavour’ that started the tobacco industry on this road of flavoured tobacco. The University of Waterloo latest study found that 34% of our youth (Grades 6-12) smoked menthol cigarettes in the previous 30 days. This is clearly a ‘flavour’ that our youth like. We do not know of any other ‘flavour’ that has this much of an impact. We know that many adult smokers who started in their youth started with menthol cigarettes. Bill 60 states that no flavoured tobacco products except menthol will be sold in Nova Scotia. **You could strengthen the bill even more by including menthol in the list of banned flavours.** This would protect our youth even more.

SFNS realizes that many vendors will need time to adjust to the new rules. However we feel that it is critical that the proclamation date be set after the third reading to ensure the integrity of Bill 60. **We urge the government to set the date now.** Any delay is likely to result in the comprehensive legislation being watered down over time, as seems to be happening in Alberta, thanks to inevitable lobbying of the tobacco industry.

Thank you for giving SFNS an opportunity to express our support, our concerns and our recommendations regarding Bill 60. If I may quote, Nova Scotia’s health vision, “Healthy people, healthy communities for generations”, this is the place to start. Even Nova Scotia’s mission statement talks about health, healing and learning, it would be foolish for us to not to apply learnings from the past. We urge you to once again make Nova Scotia a leader in tobacco control

Respectfully submitted,



Krista McMullin, President