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Society du cancer

NOVA SCOTIA DIVISION

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Dear Mr. Hebb,

As a Board Member on behalf of the Canadian Cancer Society – Nova Scotia Division, I am pleased to provide a letter in support of Bill 60 to amend the Smoke-free Places Act and the Tobacco Access Act. While we have seen progress in Nova Scotia over the past decade with smoking rates falling from 29.5% of the population in 2001, to 23.5% in 2007-2010, the need for this legislation is clear as Nova Scotia remains tied with Newfoundland in having the highest rates of smoking among Canada's provinces. Smoking remains the single largest preventable health risk contributing to our high rates of cancer and heart disease.

Members of the Legislature will be told that this Bill goes too far in limiting access to flavoured tobacco, water pipes and e-cigarettes. In 2003, similar comments were made throughout Cape Breton Island suggesting it would be impossible to get all municipalities to agree to ban smoking in public places. Those municipal units showed great leadership at that time by taking this bold action, now considered normal. Bill 60's intent to limit access in public places for e-cigarettes and water pipes will quickly be accepted as normal.

Bill 60 would be strengthened if the ban on flavoured cigarette products was extended to include menthol. There is clear evidence that flavoured tobacco products are appealing to the youth market. Almost one-half of Nova Scotia high school smokers chose a flavoured product and rates of youth who chose menthol cigarettes are 7.5 times higher than adults. With all we know about the dangers associated with smoking, how can we as a society accept the sale of these deadly products targeting youth? Vigilance in enforcement will be required as the Tobacco Industry has shown its ability to avoid the intent of legislation, most recently by successfully neutering the Federal Government's efforts in this area.

I commend the Nova Scotia government for presenting this legislation as we know healthy public policy can, and will, improve the health of Nova Scotians. The need is clear.

John Malcom

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