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Presentation to Law Amendments, Bill 90, Tobacco Access Act (amended) April 22, 2015

Smoke Free Kings is an award winning community coalition that has been working for more than 25 years to reduce the devastating effect of tobacco on our communities. We have, in particular, worked to protect the health and wellbeing of children and youth. The proposed amendments in Bill 90 will make an enormous difference to this work and we would like to say on the record that the Government has our full and unwavering support for this bill.

Bill 90 represents the most up-to-date, comprehensive tobacco control legislation in the country. Banning flavoured tobacco products will contribute to promoting the health of all Nova Scotians and in particular will protect children and youth. We congratulate the government for the vision and leadership that is represented in these proposed amendments to the Tobacco Access Act.

We have been extremely concerned about proliferation of flavoured tobacco products. Flavoured products, including menthol, are clearly aimed at the youth market. Fruit and candy-flavoured tobacco products as well as menthol cigarettes mask the harsh taste of tobacco and make it easier for youth to become addicted. Menthol allows a person to inhale smoke more deeply and enhances nicotine absorption which increases the related health risks. We know a high percentage of youth who smoke use menthol – this is not an ‘adult’ flavor. One in three NS youth reported using menthol and almost half reported using flavored tobacco. Passing this bill will help protect our young people from addiction, disease and death caused by tobacco industry products.

We continue to be concerned about the role e-cigarettes play in initiating youth smoking behaviour. There continues to be significant uncertainty about this product. We encourage the Government to a precautionary stance and ban flavors from this product as well.

We congratulate the government on Bill 90, banning the sale of flavoured tobacco products and we commend the government’s decision to include menthol.

Thank you

Christina Swetnam, Chair
Smoke Free Kings