

My name is Mike Meathrel, I am the President of Dvine Laboratories and the Chairman of the Vaping Industry Trade Association or VITA.

Dvine Laboratories is one on Canada's largest e-Liquid contract packaging facilities where we manufacturer for many Canadian brands and produce over 150,000 unique SKUs. Of those SKUs, approximately 10-15,000 are some form of tobacco flavour. This will become more relevant later in my message.

I would like to start by recognizing the Nova Scotia government's well-founded efforts in addressing youth vaping in this province. It is clear that this is a problem that must be addressed. But it must be addressed sensibly, without creating further unintended harm.

The blanket prohibition on flavoured e-cigarettes set to come into force on April 1, 2020 will create several harmful consequences, including:

- depriving adult smokers of a well-recognized harm reduction mechanism;
- driving individuals back to combustible tobacco; and
- facilitating a black market.

Nova Scotians that have quit smoking or are transitioning from smoking with the use of vaping products are being ignored through this approach. We have thousands of customers that rely on the flavour of their vaping products to keep them away from combustible tobacco. Flavoured e-liquid is recognized as a key element in successfully transitioning from smoking.

Flavoured products available in adult-only, speciality vape shops and other channels such as Convenience Stores offer smokers looking to transition away from cigarettes or quit with a significantly less harmful option.

A recent publication in the journal of Science raises concerns that vaping bans could take away an important smoking-cessation tool. The publication also points to studies that demonstrate that vaping is a valuable tool for smokers trying to quit.

In contrast, there is no evidence available to support that a blanket prohibition on flavoured e-cigarettes is necessary to combat youth uptake.

With respect to the amendments before the Committee today, the term 'characterizing flavour' is complicated by variable sensitivity among the population in detecting flavour chemicals and variability in odour potency.

Further, the legislation as amended purports to allow the sale of tobacco flavoured e-cigarettes.

It is scientifically impossible to replicate combustible tobacco scent or flavour before during or after use with e-liquids. There is no industry standard for tobacco flavoured e-liquid. As noted, approximately 10-15,000 of Dvine's SKU's are some form of tobacco flavour.

Tobacco flavoured e-liquids are essentially placebo flavourings created from food flavours. Tobacco flavoured e-liquid may be derived from food additives such as, caramel, floral, nuts, maples, sweeteners, custards, vanillas, butterscotch, fruits and many more.

"Please Note" these flavours have and never can taste or smell like combustible tobacco. We are comparing 2 separate Nicotine Delivery Systems. One is combustion and the other is aerosol or steam to put this in more relative terms.

We urge the Nova Scotia government to follow the example of their provincial counterparts in British Columbia, Ontario, and Alberta by ensuring that new regulations and standards are based on the best available evidence as well as robust consultation with a diversity of stakeholders.

This is an opportunity for the government to pause and develop targeted public policy and regulatory processes that address the spike in youth uptake.

We need to ensure that we avoid another public health crisis by driving a whole new cohort of smokers and reformed smokers back to combustible tobacco or the dangerous and unregulated black market.

The amendments place at risk the rights and liberties of Nova Scotians with respect to their freedoms to choose safer alternatives to smoking combustible tobacco.

There are paths forward that safeguard our youth, while also protecting those who legitimately rely on flavour e-cigarettes as a tobacco-cessation tool. The amendments fail to achieve these twin objectives. We urge the government's reconsideration of its blanket prohibition on flavoured e-cigarettes.

I would like to thank you for your time today and we look forward to working with you on future regulations and I would be happy to answer any questions.