

**For Immediate Release
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Prince Edward Island Vaping Crackdown Will Drive Former Smokers Back to Tobacco

Banning the sale of vaping devices in convenience stores won't help tobacco smokers quit says convenience store industry.

CHARLOTTETOWN, PE (November 22, 2019) – Convenience store retailers are concerned that the original intent of vaping products – to help tobacco smokers switch to reduced risk alternatives and ideally to quit smoking – has been lost in the aggressive vaping crackdown with new legislation passed in Prince Edward Island.

Bill 112, a private member's bill tabled by PEI PC MLA Corey Deagle, received all-party support and passed third and final reading in the Legislature on November 21. It is now awaiting changes to regulations and Royal Assent before it comes into effect.

The new legislation will raise the minimum legal age for purchasing tobacco or vaping products to 21 years from 19; ban the sale of all flavoured vaping agents; and restrict the sale of vaping products to "tobacconist shops," who are retailers whose primary business is the sale of tobacco and/or vaping products.

"Youth access to vaping products is a serious issue, which is why our industry calls on governments to bring real action like increased enforcement and stricter fines to any retailer selling to youth and a crackdown on unregulated products online that have no age-verification at all," says Anne Kothawala, president and CEO of the Convenience Industry Council of Canada. "Unfortunately, emotion trumped consultation and evidence-based facts in Prince Edward Island."

Kenny Snow, who operates Oyster Bed Rite Stop in Oyster Bed, Prince Edward Island says that it doesn't make much sense that convenience retailers are allowed to sell tobacco products but not vaping products to adult customers: "We are either responsible retailers or we are not. But we are responsible, and we have a strong track record of following proof-of-age procedures and restricting youth access to age-restricted products."

Mike Hammoud, president of the Atlantic Convenience Stores Association, is concerned about the impact that the new legislation will have on adults who are trying to quit tobacco smoking: "The original intent of vaping was to help tobacco smokers switch to a reduced risk product and, hopefully, quit. Underage vaping is a great concern for everyone, but we can't lose sight of the impact on adults. By restricting access to a small number of vape shops we run the risk that adult consumers will lose motivation and simply switch back to tobacco products. It's a fact, convenience stores are convenient, and we should be a frontline strategy to tobacco smoking reduction and cessation through vape products."

The two associations along with responsible convenience store retailers are calling on other jurisdictions considering changes to vaping legislation to spend less time on emotion and more time on consultations and planning to tangibly address all the issues impacting adult users and the incidence of youth vaping.

About the Convenience Industry Council of Canada (CICC)

The CICC is a national, not-for-profit council that unites our members who put the needs of the customer first and provides a place of community. We advocate for the diverse and dynamic convenience channel by representing retail and distributor members to the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government on issues affecting their business. For more information, please visit: <https://convenienceindustry.ca/>

About the Atlantic Convenience Store Association (ACSA)

The Atlantic Convenience Stores Association is a membership, not-for-profit organization representing convenience store owners and operators in Atlantic Canada. Our mission is to ensure an economically viable and sustainable business environment for our convenience store members. For more information, please visit: <https://www.theacsa.ca>

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