

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DECEMBER 18, 2020

Statement from Convenience Industry Council of Canada on Proposed Nicotine Regulations

Toronto, ON – The following is a statement from Anne Kothawala, President & CEO of the Convenience Industry Council of Canada (CICC) on Health Canada’s introduction of proposed nicotine restrictions:

“Canada’s convenience stores are the primary destination for adult smokers looking to make a switch to a reduced risk product. Our sales data shows that smokers require sufficient nicotine concentration in order to successfully transition. Offering our customers this choice and encouraging them to make the switch is in line with Health Canada’s stated public health objective of reducing smoking rates.

The federal government’s proposal to limit nicotine concentration is misguided and contradicts this public health goal. Eliminating nicotine concentrations greater than 20 mg/ml will push adult users back to tobacco, or to the illegal online market – neither of which are desired public health outcomes. Also, adult smokers considering transition will be discouraged, as CICC member sales data shows that over 80% of our customers purchase the higher nicotine content product when beginning the transition to vape.

One thing is clear: nicotine caps will not solve the youth vaping issue. We support the government’s goal of addressing youth vaping and are proud that our channel has a proven track record of retailing age-restricted products. Convenience stores are not the problem. Reducing youth vaping requires a multi-faceted approach that clamps down on the unregulated online market and provides for stiffer penalties for any retailers selling to minors. This policy will make it more likely that youth will access higher nicotine vaping products through illegal online markets.

Lastly, the proposed implementation date of just fifteen days is simply unworkable for our retailers. Previous implementation timelines have been months long – not days – which allow convenience stores to become compliant. This will impose significant costs on our industry at a time when businesses are struggling with both the economic and health impacts of COVID-19. Government has already acknowledged these challenges earlier this year when they provided a 6-month extension to previous vape regulations and should apply the same approach in this case.

We are calling on the government to reconsider their decision to limit nicotine concentrations and to increase the implementation period for retailers.”

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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