

campaign for a smoke-free alberta

Premier Rachel Notley
Government of Alberta
307 Legislature Building
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

"We are committed to making progress on reducing tobacco use across this province. That is why we banned the use of menthol cigarettes soon after we got elected, and we will continue to work very, very hard on that matter."

October 23, 2018

- Premier Rachel Notley,
Alberta Legislative Assembly, May 8, 2018

Dear Premier Notley;

Re: Alberta's life-saving tobacco legislation heading to the chopping block

It is with profound alarm and disappointment that we find it necessary to remind you that your government has still not fully proclaimed the *Tobacco and Smoking Reduction Act* (TSRA) into force.

Passed five years ago with the unanimous support of your MLA caucus, and with the enthusiastic support of the public health community, several unproclaimed sections of the TSRA are now on the verge of being automatically repealed by the *Statutes Repeal Act* unless your Cabinet fully proclaims the legislation by December 2018.

Tobacco is the number one preventable cause of death in Alberta—claiming 3,800 lives annually. Tobacco dependence is widely recognized as a pediatric illness since most users start as adolescents. According to the latest Canadian Student Tobacco and Drug Survey, there are 28,000 youth tobacco users in Alberta in grades 6 to 12. Sadly many of these young people will succumb to disease, disability and premature death resulting from their tobacco dependence.

The unproclaimed sections of the TSRA go directly to the heart of reducing youth initiation to smoking. If enacted, these unproclaimed sections would close several loopholes and omissions that put thousands of Alberta youth at risk of nicotine addiction and the deadly consequences of tobacco use.

The remaining loopholes and omissions in the TSRA include:

- Allowing minors to purchase and use vaping devices that contain nicotine.
- Allowing retailers to sell vaping devices and nicotine liquid to minors.
- Allowing minors to sell tobacco, vaping devices and nicotine liquid.
- Not requiring retailers to card suspected minors when they are attempting to purchase vaping devices or nicotine liquid.
- Not requiring retailers to complete mandatory training to prevent the sale of vaping devices or nicotine liquid to minors.
- Allowing waterpipe (shisha) smoking in public establishments despite the well-documented health risks of secondhand smoke.
- Allowing minors to enter and use waterpipes in commercial establishments.
- Not requiring businesses to card suspected minors when attempting to use waterpipes.
- Allowing the sale of flavoured shisha tobacco which has become the most popular form of flavoured tobacco among Alberta youth.

Despite the fact that the TSRA received extensive public discourse when passed in 2013, your government stated in 2015 and again in 2018 that it wanted to conduct *more* consultations before fully proclaiming the bill. However we are unaware of any formal consultations that have been conducted in the past three years.

Now, with the Statutes Repeal Act looming, your government's failure to fully enact the legislation can be viewed as choosing to kill important sections of this important public health legislation. This devastating oversight would allow the tobacco industry to keep targeting Alberta kids with flavoured tobacco and with vaping devices that contain nicotine. This oversight would likely result in thousands more Alberta youth becoming addicted to nicotine and to suffer the deadly consequences of tobacco use.

Please make the right choice for public health and Alberta youth by fully proclaiming the TSRA without further delay. Alberta youth deserve first class protection from all forms of tobacco, smoking, and nicotine. Protection delayed is protection denied.

One Cabinet meeting could make a world of difference to thousands of Alberta youth.

Sincerely,

CAMPAIGN FOR A SMOKE-FREE ALBERTA



Donna Hastings
CEO Alberta & NWT
Heart & Stroke Foundation



Chelsea Draeger
Executive Director
Canadian Cancer Society, Alberta/NWT Division



Leigh Allard
President and CEO
The Lung Association, Alberta & NWT



Les Hagen, MSM
Executive Director
Action on Smoking & Health (ASH Canada)



Angeline Webb
President
Alberta Public Health Association



Dr. Candace Nykiforuk
Co-Lead
Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention

Copies

Minister of Health and Deputy Premier
Cabinet Committee on Social Policy
Party leaders, health critics and house leaders