



## RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

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PETITION No.: **421-02000**

BY: **MR. MARCIL (MIRABEL)**

DATE: **JANUARY 30, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **MR. BILL BLAIR**

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Response by the Minister of Health

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

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SUBJECT

**Tobacco**

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**ORIGINAL TEXT**

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**REPLY**

Vaping products were first introduced about a decade ago; since then, their use has grown significantly worldwide, including among youth.

Young people in Canada are trying new products. The 2015 Canadian Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey found that 26 percent of youth aged 15-19 and 30 percent of young adults aged 20-24 had tried an e-cigarette. Among students, the 2014-15 Canadian Student Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey found that the percentage of students in grades 6-12 who reported having tried an e-cigarette was equal to the percentage of students who reported having tried a regular cigarette (18 percent for both).

Public health and safety considerations in relation to vaping products were the primary drivers for the Government's reexamination of its approach to regulating vaping products in *Bill S-5, an Act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*. Although scientific knowledge is still evolving, it is clear that vaping products can bring public health benefits if they reduce tobacco-related death and disease by helping smokers either quit or switch completely to a less harmful source of nicotine. However, vaping products may also pose harms to human health, particularly for youth. One of the aims of Bill S-5 is to take a balanced

approach to protect youth and non-smokers of tobacco products from nicotine exposure and addiction as well as from inducements to tobacco use while allowing adults legal access to a less harmful alternative to tobacco products.

Health Canada is aware of these studies and they form part of the emerging evidence base that the Department is using to develop a regulatory regime for vaping products. Bill S-5 is generally consistent with the conclusions of these studies.

For instance, the Royal College of Physicians (UK) report entitled *Nicotine without smoke: tobacco harm reduction (2016)* concludes that “e-cigarettes are much safer than smoking.” It also acknowledges that the “possibility of some long-term harm from e-cigarette use cannot be dismissed” and calls on regulators to develop appropriate product standards to protect public health. This is consistent with Bill S-5’s balanced approach to protect non-smokers, especially youth, while allowing adult smokers a less harmful alternative to tobacco use.

In addition, the University of Victoria (Centre for Addictions Research, BC) report entitled *Clearing the Air: A systematic review on the harms and benefits of e-cigarettes and vapour devices*, concludes that “e-cigarettes contain substantially fewer toxicants than does smoke from tobacco cigarettes” and that “there is encouraging evidence that vapour devices can be at least as effective as other nicotine replacements” to help smokers quit. It also calls on regulators to ensure “that only the safest devices are legally available, thereby reducing harm for both direct and second hand exposure.”

In addition, Bill S-5 would amend the *Non-smokers’ Health Act* in order to protect those in federally-regulated workplaces such as banks, commercial aircrafts and federal government offices from the potential harms of second-hand vapour, by subjecting the use of vaping products to the same prohibitions as tobacco products.

The Government of Canada will continue to support scientific research to better understand the health impacts of vaping and gather data on how Canadians are using these products.