

Non-Smokers' Rights Association

L'Association pour les droits des non-fumeurs

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Red Letter Day for Health of Canadians as Government Mandates Drab Brown Tobacco Packaging

Toronto — The Board, staff, and members of the Non-Smokers' Rights Association (NSRA) reacted with jubilation to the announcement today by Health Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor that the government has published draft regulations requiring plain and standardized packaging for *all* tobacco products.

“Plain and standardized tobacco packaging is a critical public health measure. Today’s announcement will mean Canadian youth will no longer be subjected to alluring cigarette packs that belie their addictive and deadly contents,” stated Melodie Tilson, NSRA’s Director of Policy. “As well, global research is clear that plain packaging greatly increases the effectiveness of the health warnings and enhances smoking cessation.”

Canada was once a world leader in tobacco control and today resumes that mantle with the plain and standardized tobacco packaging requirements, many of which set world precedents. Only one cigarette pack format will be permitted—the traditional slide-and-shell. This means no more flip-top packs that obscure the graphic image when the smoker opens the pack to retrieve a cigarette. Both the inside and outside of the packs will be in drab brown (Pantone 448C). Only 2 sizes of cigarettes will be permitted—regular and king size. “Banning slim and superslim cigarettes and the alluring purse packs in which they are sold will mean that adolescent and young adult women will no longer be subjected to the implicit messaging that smoking is sexy and can help keep you slim. Tobacco companies will no longer be able to target vulnerable young women with these despicable products, and that alone is a major win for public health!” declared Tilson.

Other key measures include limiting the brand name to one line, prohibiting references to colour and filter technology in the name, and prohibiting all branding on the cigarettes themselves.

The Government of Canada has committed to achieving 5% tobacco use by 2035, a commitment recently reaffirmed by Health Minister Petitpas Taylor. Today’s announcement of plain and standardized tobacco packaging will set Canada firmly on the path toward that goal. But achieving such a significant reduction in the prevalence of tobacco use demands many more bold moves to rein in the predatory tobacco industry. As Tilson concluded “Tobacco companies continue to exercise far too much freedom to manipulate tobacco products and tobacco pricing and thus continue to addict Canadians to their lethal products. It’s time that government policy truly reflected the global body of evidence concerning the health and social consequences of tobacco use.”

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