

NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

Non-Smokers' Rights Association / L'Association pour les droits des non-fumeurs

Ottawa – On World No Tobacco Day, whose theme this year is Get Ready for Plain Packaging, the Non-Smokers' Rights Association (NSRA) congratulates the federal government for taking a major step forward on the road to plain and standardized packaging of tobacco. “The launching of a public consultation signals the government’s intention to make implementation of plain and standardized tobacco packaging reforms a high priority,” noted Melodie Tilson, Director of Policy with the NSRA.

The Non-Smokers' Rights Association applauds Health Minister Jane Philpott for acknowledging that “now is the time to pick up the pace” of tobacco control in Canada, given that smoking remains the number one cause of preventable illness and death, with 37,000 Canadians dying every year of a tobacco-caused disease. Although tobacco advertising has been restricted in Canada, tobacco companies exploit every possible packaging design feature to entice new users and to alleviate the health concerns of addicted smokers.

“Plain and standardized packaging of *all* tobacco products is a critical health measure,” affirmed Tilson. “It will prevent tobacco companies from using attractive colours and logos, as well as innovative shapes and sizes to convey positive messages about tobacco use and downplay the health warnings.”

One of the most important elements of the reforms under consideration is standardizing the cigarette itself—no specialty papers, no distinctive filter designs, no logos, and a uniform size. “The research is very clear that slim cigarettes target young, image-conscious women and are more likely to be perceived as milder and less harmful,” emphasized Melodie Tilson. Plain and standardized packaging and plain and standardized cigarettes will go a long way to eliminating tobacco industry deception about the nature of its products—deception that is vital to attracting new smokers and keeping current smokers in the market. “After all,” summarized Tilson, “poison should not be sold in pretty little packages.”

The Non-Smokers' Rights Association looks forward to participating in the consultation and to ensuring that the resultant reforms provide the best possible protection for Canadians from enticements to start or continue using tobacco products.

The Non-Smokers' Rights Association has been working to protect Canadians from tobacco industry products for over 40 years and has led successful campaigns for many of Canada’s major tobacco control reforms, including smoke-free legislation, tax increases, and world-precedent-setting graphic health warnings on tobacco packages.

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