

Non-Smokers' Rights Association Smoking and Health Action Foundation

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Exposing recent tobacco industry front groups and alliances

The tobacco industry has a serious credibility problem. It is, after all, an industry that has lied about the risks of its products, lied about addiction, lied about its manipulation of nicotine, lied that its marketing has not targeted kids, and lied about the risks of second-hand smoke.¹ There is evidence that the Canadian industry has also lied about its involvement in tobacco smuggling. Indeed, one tobacco company now faces criminal charges related to its involvement in contraband in the 1990s. Because of this credibility problem, tobacco manufacturers on their own are unlikely to be successful in delaying or preventing governments from implementing key tobacco control measures. As a result, the industry has resorted to having its friends and allies engage in lobbying and advocacy to defend its interests. For example, the Canadian industry very effectively used the Alliance for Sponsorship Freedom to delay, by a full five years, the government's implementation of a ban on tobacco sponsorship advertising. It also used the Pub and Bar Coalition of Canada (PUBCO) to vehemently oppose smoking bans in restaurants and bars. Tobacco companies nurture and groom these relationships, often by reaching into their deep pockets to make strategic donations and make financial contributions.

The industry's financial contributions to its allies fulfill numerous, often hidden, objectives:

- buy credibility through their partners' voices and achievements;
- divert attention *away* from the daily consequences of tobacco business operations and practices;
- promote false solutions.

This report highlights *recent* examples of tobacco industry funding and contributions to tobacco industry front groups, organizations that behave like front groups, think-tanks, medical faculties, university academics, hospitals, charitable organizations, cultural events and venues.

1. Front Groups

It is now well documented that the tobacco industry uses front groups as a strategy to defeat or weaken any effective tobacco control measures. A comprehensive definition of "front group" is provided by the *SourceWatch Encyclopedia*:

¹ United States District Court For the District of Columbia. United States of America et al, v. Philip Morris USA Inc., et al. Final Opinion: August 17, 2006. Civil Action No. 99-2496 (GK).

A front group is an organization that purports to represent one agenda while in reality it serves some other party or interest whose sponsorship is hidden or rarely mentioned.... Of course, not all organizations engaged in manipulative efforts to shape public opinion can be classified as "front groups." For example, the now-defunct [U.S.-based] Tobacco Institute was highly deceptive, but it didn't hide the fact that it represented the tobacco industry. There are also degrees of concealment. The Global Climate Coalition, for example, didn't hide the fact that its funding came from oil and coal companies, but nevertheless its name alone is sufficiently misleading that it can reasonably be considered a front group.²

By operating in the shadows cast by Big Tobacco, industry-funded front groups make it difficult to determine whether these "grassroots" organizations are truly independent or representing some other entity or vested interest. For example, citizen-based smokers' rights groups and bartenders and restaurant workers who organize themselves to work against smoke-free public places and workplaces are sometimes mischaracterized as fronts for the tobacco industry. If these groups are self-initiated it does not make their arguments against smoke-free legislation any more sound or legitimate. And, keep in mind, on numerous occasions restaurant groups have allowed themselves to be used as fronts by the tobacco industry.³

Mychoice.ca — The most recent and active tobacco industry front group is *Mychoice.ca* and its Québec counterpart, *Monchoix.ca*. The launching of both groups coincided with the tabling of plans for comprehensive smoking bans in restaurants and bars by the Ontario (September 2004) and Québec (April 2005) governments.

The *Mychoice.ca* website indicates "*it is only able to exist because of grants from the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council (CTMC)*".⁴ In fact, the CTMC provided a budget of \$2.5 million to finance the creation, promotion and operation of *Mychoice.ca*.⁵ According to the CTMC, *Mychoice.ca* was established as an online association where Canada's adult smokers could converge and voice their concerns on issues related to tobacco.⁶

The CTMC insists that "*The tobacco companies are committed to taking a hands-off approach to the new organization*" and that they are simply assisting with the dissemination of information. However, the majority of articles posted on the *Mychoice.ca* and *Monchoix.ca* websites emphasize the need to lift the ban on smoking in public places and workplaces and

² SourceWatch encyclopedia. A project of the Centre for Media and Democracy. www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Front_groups. Accessed 23 October 2007.

³ SourceWatch encyclopedia. A project of the Centre for Media and Democracy. www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Front_groups. Accessed 23 October 2007.

⁴ MonChoix.ca. About us. www.mychoice.ca/en/public/index.aspx. Accessed 1 May 2007.

⁵ MonChoix.ca. Foire Aux Questions. www.monchoix.ca/fr/public/faq.aspx. Accessed 1 December 2005.

⁶ Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council. "Tobacco Manufacturers Support Smokers' Web Site *www.mychoice.ca*." Press release. Canada Newswire/Telbec. 28 September 2004.

reduce tobacco taxes — measures that tobacco companies have long actively lobbied to achieve.

The *Mychoice.ca/Monchoix.ca* group claims to be Canada's largest adult smokers' rights group, with over 37,000 members.⁷ However, there is no way of authenticating the number of members, their age, or whether or not people are registering more than once. Since much of the content on the website is visible only to registered members, it is likely that many people (including public health professionals) register as a means of monitoring the group's activities. In January 2007 Arminda Mota, monchoix.ca president, became president of both the English and French organizations, following the resignation of the inaugural president of Mychoice.ca, Nancy Daigneault. Mychoice.ca is active politically; it has encouraged its members to punish politicians at the polls who have supported smoke-free legislation. Two members, Jordan Katz and Rob MacArthur, have recently run for office at the federal and municipal level, respectively.⁸

Fair Air Association of Canada (FAAC) — According to its website, the *Fair Air Association of Canada* is an "Association of Associations," claiming to represent the views of a myriad of stakeholders regarding second-hand smoke measures.⁹ Its membership consists of representatives of the hospitality industry, including pub and bar owners, gaming organizations (namely bingo operators), ventilation manufacturers and engineers, and tobacco companies. Its former CEO¹⁰, Karen Bodirsky, is now Director of Public Affairs for *Rothmans, Benson and Hedges Inc.*¹¹

The *FAAC* has not been as active since the emergence of Mychoice.ca. The *FAAC* served as the *CTMC*'s earlier attempt to sway public opinion and political will against comprehensive smoking bans, namely by pushing the 'accommodation/ventilation solution. *British American Tobacco*, the UK-based parent company of Canada's *Imperial Tobacco*, explained the role of the *FAAC* to its shareholders:

Twenty accommodation programmes are currently being supported by our companies....

Canada: The Fair Air Association of Canada (FAAC) is a highly active body....

FAAC members include the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers Council....

Through advocacy with Canada's provincial governments and municipal councils, FAAC members have contributed to achieving more balanced

⁷ Maloney R. "Smoke signals." *The Online Reporter*, University of Western Ontario's graduate journalism students. 7 March 2007. www.fims.uwo.ca/olr/Mar0707/Smoking_politician.html. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Fair Air Association of Canada. Web-site Homepage. www.faac.ca. Accessed 1 May 2007.

¹⁰ Bodirsky K. CEO of the Fair Air Association of Canada, 29 May 2005. www.newswire.ca/en/releases/mmnr/faac/. Accessed 28 March 2008.

¹¹ Bodirsky K. Director of Public Affairs, Rothmans, Benson & Hedges Inc. www.rothmansinc.ca/eng_contactus.asp. Accessed 28 March 2008.

outcomes for several local hospitality industries in the face of what it sees as a 'tide' of no-smoking legislation, often supported by government funded anti-tobacco lobbyists.¹²

BAT was attempting to reverse or slow down the growing momentum in favour of comprehensive smoking bans in Canada and gain access to media, politicians and the hospitality sector through the *FAAC*.

The *FAAC* dismisses second-hand smoke as a serious threat to health, depicts medical evidence as flawed and exaggerated, and champions "ventilation science" as the only viable alternative to smoking bans.¹³ The organization predicts economic disaster for the hospitality industry should smoking bans not be reversed. The Québec division of the *FAAC* reported in newspapers that bingo revenues from establishments associated with the *Loto-Québec* network were down 20-30% as a result of the smoking ban,¹⁴ when in fact *Loto-Québec's* own financial reports indicate only a 1% decline.^{15,16} The *FAAC* has repeatedly funded flawed surveys and studies, including one authored by economist Michael Evans, a long-time consultant for the defunct tobacco industry front group, National Smokers Alliance.^{17,18} Evans claims that smoking bans have resulted in economic disaster,¹⁹ claims that have been disproved by several other researchers.^{20,21}

Like *Mychoice.ca*, the *FAAC* is a front group that spreads myths and mobilizes against tobacco control legislation on behalf of the tobacco industry. Nevertheless, many otherwise credible stakeholders continue to be duped by this tobacco industry proxy, including the *Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety*, which presents the *FAAC* as a

¹² **British American Tobacco.** "Public smoking: restoring balance in Canada," Social Report 2003/2004. [www.bat.com/group/sites/uk_3mnfen.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO6RZGHL/\\$FILE/medMD626P62.pdf?openelement](http://www.bat.com/group/sites/uk_3mnfen.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO6RZGHL/$FILE/medMD626P62.pdf?openelement). Accessed October 2004.

¹³ **Fair Air Association.** "Ventilation, not EI benefits, solution to smoking in Casinos." Press release. 31 March 2005.

¹⁴ **Presse Canadienne.** « Loi sur le tabac: des organismes sont en crise. » Cyberpresse. 30 May 2007. www.cyberpresse.ca/article/20070530/CPACTUALITES/70530097/6488/CPACTUALITES. Accessed 28 March 2008.

¹⁵ **Loto-Québec.** « L'ère de la croissance continue est révolue à Loto-Québec. » Press release. 20 June 2007. <http://lotoquebec.com/corporatif/nav/salle-de-presse/communiquésDetail?id=7617>. Accessed June 2007.

¹⁶ **Loto-Québec.** Rapport intérimaire 2006 - 3e trimestre (du 26 septembre au 25 décembre 2006), pg. 7. 19 February 2007. www.loto-quebec.com/corporatif/pdf/salleepresse/rapport3trimestre.pdf. Accessed May 2007.

¹⁷ **Centers for Disease Control.** Surgeon General Report - Reducing Tobacco Use. Chapter 5: Regulatory Efforts. 2000. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2000/00_pdfs/chapter5.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2008.

¹⁸ **Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco.** Opposition to Smoke-Free Policies: Individuals: Consultants. Website Text. www.ocat.org/opposition/consultants.html#8. Accessed 8 November 2007.

¹⁹ **Fair Air Association of Canada.** "Government Data Shows Smoking Bans Devastate Bar Industry Reports Leading Economist." Press release. 19 April 2004. www.faac.ca/content/mediaroom/PressRelease_20050419.pdf. [Website no longer on-line]

²⁰ **GPIAtlantic.** The Economic Impact of Smoke-Free Workplaces: An Assessment for Newfoundland & Labrador. March 2003. www.gpiatlantic.org/pdf/health/tobacco/smoke-free-nf.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2008.

²¹ **Scollo et al.** Review of the quality of studies on the economic effects of smoke-free policies on the hospitality industry. *Tobacco Control* 2003; 12, 13-20. <http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/12/1/13>. Accessed 28 March 2008.

credible source of health and safety information,²² when the information it provides is both inaccurate and biased. With no designated English-speaking spokesperson, the *FAAC*'s current media strategy appears to be merely profiling money-losing establishments, attributing their downfall to smoke-free legislation.

Union des tenanciers de bars du Québec — While many hospitality and gaming associations across Canada that once opposed smoke-free laws now acknowledge that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages, those under the tobacco industry's influence are less likely to agree.

In spring 2006, the *Corporation des bars, brasseries et tavernes du Québec* — the veteran association for the bar industry in Québec — changed its position and decided to support the Quebec *Tobacco Act*. A few weeks later, a small group of dissident bars rallied behind bar owner Voula Demopoulos and Peter Sergakis, an entrepreneur owning several bars, cabarets and buildings in the Montreal area, and founded the *Union des tenanciers de bars du Québec (UTBQ)*.²³ This group has attracted bars which appear to have lost money for any number of reasons. The group would like to see the courts repeal Quebec's smoking ban and other measures in the *Tobacco Act*. The group's court case against the province is being financed by Sergakis, a man of considerable wealth who has a long history of challenging municipal bylaws as well as some provincial regulations not related to tobacco.^{24,25} Establishments owned by both Sergakis and Demopoulos have hosted tobacco industry sponsored parties.^{26,27} In the Québec *Tobacco Act* court case, they are represented by the well-known constitutional lawyer Julius Grey. The courts have agreed to hear the case, but in February 2007 the Superior Court denied an injunction that would have suspended enforcement of the ban. Interestingly, as the principal complainants in the lawsuit, neither Sergakis nor Demopoulos has filed their own business records in court as 'proof' that their establishments in Québec have suffered as a result of the law.

Tobacco Control Accountability Initiative (TCAI) — Luc Martial, who is quick to boast about his 'credentials in tobacco control', but not at all up front about his work as a consultant for the tobacco industry, founded the *Tobacco Control Accountability Initiative* in

²² Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. OSH Links: Indoor air quality. Website text. www.ccohs.ca/oshlinks/subject/indoorairquality.html. Accessed April 2007.

²³ Union des tenanciers de bar du Québec. "L'Union des tenanciers de bars du Québec (UTBQ) makes a stand: A 24-hour "sit-in" at the offices of Premier Jean Charest," Press release, 28 March 2006. www.newswire.ca/fr/releases/archive/March2006/28/c6554.html. Accessed 28 March 2008.

²⁴ Journal La Presse. « Peter Sergakis demande une enquête du vérificateur général sur les hippodromes », 23 December 2002.

²⁵ Dean J. « Une autre manif contre la surtaxe tourne au vinaigre », *Le Devoir*, p. A1, 6 April 1993.

²⁶ ChartAttack.com. "I Mother Earth Plan Extreme Tour Of Ontario," 8 April 2003. [Note: I Mother Earth played at Le Skratz in Oshawa on 28 April 2003 as part of a tour with the Extreme Music Series. JTI-Macdonald bankrolled the Extreme Music Series concerts].

²⁷ Statements made by the then manager of the Sky Bar Complexe, April 2005.

2007.²⁸ TCAI claims to work “to actively ensure accountability on the tobacco control file in Canada” and aims to “keep both private and public sector stakeholders held to the highest ethical standards.”²⁹ Since the organization’s launch, Martial has lobbied politicians in Nova Scotia against a law that bans tobacco displays at retail,^{30 31} and has railed against what he calls “unjustifiably” high tobacco taxes.^{32 33} Martial has also spoken out against proposed smoke-free legislation in P.E.I., which would ban smoking in cars with kids.³⁴ His organization’s website has information on it which seems to argue against governments making tobacco control a priority. The document on Martial’s website says the No. 1 problem in Canada – especially among youth – is not tobacco use, but cannabis.³⁵

In 2007, Martial was quoted in a news story as being a government affairs spokesperson for Prime Time Inc., a U.S.-based company that manufactures cigarillos or ‘mini cigars’, many of which are candy-flavoured.³⁶ In the article, Martial argued that there is no truth to the claim that the tobacco industry uses candy flavours to lure kids into the market.

No mention is made on TCAI’s website about the fact that Martial is a consultant for the tobacco industry. The omission is curious, considering most of TCAI’s arguments are that governments are unaccountable in their efforts to curb tobacco use. When advancing the arguments, Martial urges governments to consult ‘thoroughly’ and ‘fairly’ with all ‘legitimate’ stakeholders. In a resume-like document titled: “Luc Martial: Professional Background: Tobacco File in Canada”, he does not mention any of the work he has done for pro-tobacco vested interests, nor does he mention any of the names of the private sector businesses that paid his consultancy fees for six years. From 2001 to 2007, Martial is simply listed as an *Independent Consultant*, who has served various private sector interests.

²⁸ **Tobacco Control Accountability Initiative.** “Luc Martial – TCAI Founder: Professional Background in Tobacco Control.” www.tcai.ca/InfoDocs_en/Founder/ProfessionalBackground.doc. Accessed 28 March 2008.

²⁹ **Tobacco Control Accountability Initiative.** “If You’re Aware...” www.tcai.ca/InfoDocs_en/MediaRoom/Website%20-%20Homepage%20-%20If%20You're%20Aware.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2008.

³⁰ **Martial L.** Letter to Mr. Darrell Dexter, Leader of the Opposition, from Luc Martial, founder of TCAI. 26 February 2008.

³¹ **Tobacco Control Accountability Initiative.** “Public Accountability And Tobacco Control In Nova Scotia: General commentary on the province’s current ban on the visual presence of tobacco products at retail.” December 2007.

³² **Martial L.** “Extremist Lobby Groups First To Blame For Tobacco Contraband.” Tobacco Control Accountability Initiative. Press release. 6 February 2008. www.tcai.ca/InfoDocs_en/MediaRoom/MEDIA%20ADVISORY%20-%20CONTRABAND.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2008.

³³ **Martial L.** “Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco Front Group For Extremists Who Created Problem.” Tobacco Control Accountability Initiative. Press release. 27 February 2008. www.tcai.ca/InfoDocs_en/MediaRoom/Website%20-%20Media%20Releases%20-%20Contraband2.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2008.

³⁴ **Martial L.** “Anti-Tobacco Leaders in P.E.I. Retake The Lead On Leadership.” Tobacco Control Accountability Initiative. Press release. 11 March 2008. www.tcai.ca/InfoDocs_en/MediaRoom/Website%20-%20Media%20Releases%20-%20PEI%20Smoking%20Rooms.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2008.

³⁵ **Tobacco Control Accountability Initiative.** “Tobacco As A Government Priority – Youth, Alcohol and Cannabis.” www.tcai.ca/InfoDocs_en/Publications/Tobacco%20as%20a%20Government%20Priority.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2008.

³⁶ **Rochford N.** “Don’t be fooled by sweet taste.” *The Guardian* (newspaper in Charlottetown). www.theguardian.pe.ca/index.cfm?sid=83559&sc=98. Accessed 28 March 2008.

In November 2005, Martial worked for a company called *Tobaccostat Canada*. In November 2005 he spoke at a pro-tobacco conference called *Tabinfo 2005*. Biographical information from the event's website indicates:

Over the last 4 years, Mr. Martial has worked in productive partnerships with tobacco growers, manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers and smokers' groups. Focused on shared stewardship, meaningful consultation and public accountability, Mr. Martial works towards securing a voice in government for those private sector stakeholders whose lives and livelihoods are directly impacted by public policies on tobacco.³⁷

Most, if not all, of Martial's public policy proposals on the tobacco file, if implemented, would benefit the tobacco manufacturers, and would therefore inversely harm public health.

2. Organizations that behave like tobacco industry fronts

National hospitality and retailer organizations such as the *Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association*, the *Canadian Hotel Association*, and the *Canadian Convenience Stores Association* and their provincial counterparts—the *Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association*, the *Ontario Convenience Stores Association*, and the *Ontario Korean Businessmen's Association*—have all worked closely with the tobacco industry or with interests it funds from time to time.

Restaurants have worked hard for over 30 years to block legislation designed to address second-hand smoke issues. And convenience store associations have fought hard to preserve the income of members from cigarette-generated customer traffic and industry-sponsored tobacco product 'power walls'. On these two issues the associations named above have been known to take money from tobacco companies and to support their positions.

It is important to note, however, that even though these associations have fronted for, acted as apologists for tobacco companies, or partnered with the industry to undermine or block reform, they are not front groups like *Mychoice.ca*. They are legitimate organizations that play important roles in representing the interests of their members on a wide range of issues.

Retailer associations

In April 2006, with the full support of the **Ontario Convenience Store Association (OCSA)**, the **Ontario Korean Businessmen's Association (OKBA)**, *Mac's Convenience Stores* and *Daisy Marts* protested against the upcoming ban on tobacco retail displays in Ontario.³⁸ Not

³⁷ *Tabinfo 2005*. "Luc Martial, Export Consultant, Tobaccostat, Canada." Website text for 3rd Congress Day. 16 November 2005. www.tabinfo.net/3568.0.html. Accessed 28 March 2008.

³⁸ **Canadian Convenience Stores Association**. "Enough is Enough: OKBA protest warns government to stop threatening business." *YCM. Your Convenience Manager: Canada's Convenience and Gas Magazine*. July/August 2006. <http://www.conveniencecentral.ca/images/enough.pdf>. Accessed 28 March 2008.

surprisingly, most if not all manufacturers of tobacco products sold in Ontario are associate members of the OCSA and as such are financial contributors to this large association.³⁹

In Nova Scotia, *Imperial Tobacco Canada* (ITC) sent out action kits to retailers urging them to write to their MLA and to the government to weaken and delay regulation banning tobacco products from being displayed, advertised or promoted at the point-of-sale.

A letter signed by André Roy, the Regional Sales Manager for ITC, informs retailers that “*The government has also failed to provide you with guidance on these types of signs/consumer information about the availability and price of tobacco products it will allow...*”⁴⁰ ITC then goes on to incite retailers to act, suggesting that economic losses will surely befall their business in they don’t join in a campaign to postpone the display ban. The action kit also contained a two-page question-and-answer document provided by the **Canadian Convenience Stores Association (CCSA)**, as well as a CCSA fact sheet telling retailers that “*It is not too late for us to convince the Provincial Government that this ban will have severe negative repercussions for you, Nova Scotia retailers.... if they hurt your business, they risk your support at election time... You need more time... Your business is at stake*”.⁴¹

The CCSA weighed in on the contraband tobacco problem in Canada by hosting a tobacco-industry funded forum on illegal tobacco sales in Ottawa in November 2007. According to organizers, forum participants included tobacco manufacturers, First Nations, educators, retailers, law enforcement representatives and government officials. The conference keynote speech was delivered by former RCMP commissioner and Interpol President, Norman Inkster.⁴² In his speech, Inkster, who occasionally works as a tobacco industry consultant, was highly critical of the tobacco tax rates in Canada, implying that taxes should be cut to discourage the market for contraband cigarettes. This wasn’t surprising, in and of itself, as tobacco companies frequently have their allies speak out against high taxes because price is so effective in driving down tobacco consumption. Imperial Tobacco Canada bankrolled the event. What was surprising is that both the president of the CCSA and the president of Imperial Tobacco Canada both insisted in the lead-up to the forum that it would not issue a call on governments to lower taxes. And yet, Inkster’s speech included the following remarks: “High taxation, as a tool, doesn’t discourage, it encourages [tobacco use].”⁴³ Also

³⁹ Canadian Convenience Stores Association. Associate members. <http://conveniencestores.ca/page.asp?pageid=42>. Accessed May 2007.

⁴⁰ Roy A. Letter to retailers in Nova Scotia signed by Imperial Tobacco Canada, Regional Sales Manager, Atlantic Region, 13 February 2007.

⁴¹ Canadian Convenience Stores Association. Fact sheets accompanying Imperial Tobacco Canada letter to Nova Scotia retailers. 13 February 2007.

⁴² Canadian Convenience Stores Association. “National groups call on federal government to take action on contraband tobacco.” 2 November 2007. Press release. www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/November2007/02/c3456.html. Accessed 9 November 2007.

⁴³ Curry B. “Security adviser links terrorism, contraband smokes,” *The Globe and Mail*. 3 November 2007. p. A4. www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20071103.CIGS03/TPStory. Accessed 9 November 2007.

in November 2007, Inkster was named the new chair of the federal Advisory Council on National Security.⁴⁴ However, as *The Globe and Mail's* Bill Curry reported, his ties to the tobacco industry had some questioning his objectivity on national security issues related to tobacco contraband:

Bloc Québécois MP Serge Ménard, a former public safety minister in Quebec, listened to Mr. Inkster's speech and was surprised by the strong focus on tax cuts over other measures.

"I don't think he should advise the Prime Minister on cigarette contraband if he is on the payroll of the tobacco companies, that's quite obvious," Mr. Ménard said.⁴⁵

Another example of OCSA collaboration with Imperial Tobacco Canada is the new '**We Expect ID**' initiative, launched in March 2007 at the Convenience U CARWACS Show held in Toronto. Similar to the Operation I.D. program (see below), this initiative is a tobacco industry diversion/disinformation strategy. The manufacturers know that as they focus the public's attention on the prohibition of sales to minors, they plant firmly in the minds of kids the idea that smoking is an adult activity. In this way, the manufacturers establish smoking as a badge or symbol of entry into adulthood. The 'We Expect ID' initiative, although promoted by the Ontario Convenience Stores Association,⁴⁶ is an initiative that Imperial Tobacco Canada may be contributing financially to.⁴⁷ When initiatives are bankrolled by vested interests, it raises questions about the entire project, even before considering the deflection strategy of these types of youth prevention initiatives. These types of initiatives make cigarettes appealing to youth who want to be viewed by their peers as adult-like, independent and rebellious. Tobacco companies would be committing corporate suicide if they were truly interested in implementing effective strategies to stop young people from getting their products and becoming addicted to them. The fact these types of programs are not effective in preventing youth uptake of smoking is why the tobacco companies support them.

Tobacco companies clearly have a vested interest in seeing governments implement weak tobacco control measures. Some retailers, however, may support stronger tobacco control measures in the interest of public health but may become swayed by tobacco industry propaganda reaching them through their powerful and respected retailer associations. By passing on the views, opinions and concerns of cigarette manufacturers without attribution and without giving an objective appraisal of what tougher tobacco control measures have

⁴⁴ Office of the Prime Minister. "Prime Minister announces appointments to the Advisory Council on National Security." 1 November 2007. Press release. <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?category=1&id=1883>. Accessed 9 November 2007.

⁴⁵ Ménard S. "Security adviser links terrorism, contraband smokes," by Bill Curry. *The Globe and Mail*. 3 November 2007. p. A4. www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/LAC.20071103.CIGS03/TPStory. Accessed 9 November 2007.

⁴⁶ Ontario Convenience Stores Association. "Ontario to get toughest ID check system in Canada." 7 March 2007. Press release. www.conveniencestores.ca/images/clientupload/OCSA%20We%20Expect%20ID%20Release%20-%20Final.pdf. Accessed 9 November 2007.

⁴⁷ Imperial Tobacco Canada. *Let's Talk*. 2007. p. 23.

accomplished in communities where they are already in place, convenience store associations perform a disservice to their members. Clearly, retailer associations are one of the tobacco industry's staunchest supporters; essentially, both are in the business of selling tobacco.

Operation I.D. is a program with the alleged purpose of helping retailers not to sell tobacco to minors. The program is run through a partnership between the CTMC and the Canadian Coalition for Responsible Tobacco Retailing, an organization set up by the tobacco industry. The program was originally conceived in the United States by the now defunct Tobacco Institute and was called "It's the law." The U.S. version has since changed its name to "We card" and is being promoted by the Coalition for Responsible Tobacco Retailing (the same name as in Canada).

An internal memo from U.S. tobacco giant Philip Morris from 1991 clearly indicate the true purposes of this program:

- 1- A reduction in legislation introduced and passed restricting or banning sales and marketing activities;
- 2- Passage of legislation favourable to the industry;
- 3- Greater support from business, parent and teacher groups.

A 1995 Philip Morris memo offers even more direct evidence of the industry's real motivation in setting up the program:

"[W]e believe that the first building block to a successful, fully integrated program is an "It's the law" Program. This is fundamental to our long term strategy for stopping the proliferation of anti-tobacco legislation."

Naturally, because any industry connection would raise suspicion about its purpose, Operation I.D. is run by a front, the Canadian Coalition for Responsible Tobacco Retailing. Unfortunately, over 250 businesses, organizations and politicians from across the country have endorsed the program.

Hospitality associations

The **Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association (CRFA)** was still promoting ventilation as an alternative to complete smoking bans as of 2007, despite the fact that provincial and territorial legislation in most jurisdictions in Canada had already rejected this tobacco industry supported solution.⁴⁸ The Association says it bases its position on a desire to serve all its customers, including the 20 per cent of Canadians that continue to smoke. In

⁴⁸ Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association. Industry Issues, By Topic, Smoking Regulations. <http://crfa.ca/issues/bytopic/smokingregulations.asp>. Accessed 14 September 2007.

January 2007, the CRFA issued a press release calling on the Ontario government to allow smoking shelters in the rest of the province's hospitality industry, after it was revealed that the government was having shelters constructed at some of the casinos it runs across the province.⁴⁹

CRFA has also been a firm believer in and promoter of the 'doomsday economics' myth, often advanced by tobacco industry front groups, which says that smoking bans inevitably lead to massive revenue losses in restaurants and bars. In February 2003, when a GPI Atlantic Study found no evidence of an economic decline due to smoking bans, Luc Erjavec, the CRFA representative for Atlantic Canada, authored a press release which alleged otherwise. In the release, Erjavec made the following claims without citing any sources to back up his statements:

- 920 employees were laid off and 14 businesses closed in the 80 days of a failed smoking ban in B.C.
- 40 small businesses closed in the first 18 months of a smoking ban in Ottawa bars and restaurants
- Sales are down 10-30% in bars and restaurants in Brandon, Manitoba since a smoking ban took effect in September 2002.

When the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco (OCAT) called upon him to provide the sources for his statements, Erjavec never responded.⁵⁰

According to a July 18, 2005 press release, the CRFA's Council of Chain Restaurants (Quebec) (CCRQ) scored a victory for Quebec restaurants, bars and the tobacco industry by helping to convince the province's Health Minister to postpone the start date of the smoke-free legislation to May 31, 2006. CCRQ unsuccessfully argued for DSRs as an alternative to the legislation.

CRFA has been a prominent voice in the public eye arguing against 100% smoke-free legislation for over five years, posting at least 30 related press releases and news items on its website over that time frame. A recent example came in 2007, when the City of Toronto gained new authority to tax liquor, parking, land transfers, billboards, motor vehicle ownership, and tobacco, among other things. The CRFA wrote to its members urging them to attend city council meetings and to contact their councillors to let the politicians know how any new taxes would negatively affect their business.^{51,52} Lobbying against tobacco tax

⁴⁹ Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association. "Restaurant industry seeks level playing field with government casinos." Press release. 14 January 2007.
http://crfa.ca/news/2007/restaurant_industry_seeks_level_playing_field_with_government_casinos.asp. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁵⁰ Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco. Opposition to Smoke-Free Policies: Hospitality Organizations: CRFA. Website text. www.ocat.org/opposition/hospitality_organizations.html#3. Accessed 9 November 2007.

⁵¹ Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association. Stop the Toronto Restaurant Tax! Website text. 2 May 2007.
www.crfa.ca/news/2007/stop_the_toronto_restaurant_tax.asp. Accessed 9 November 2007.

increases is what tobacco manufacturers do most adamantly, as tax increases are the No. 1 most effective strategy used to drive consumer consumption of tobacco products down. The industry recognizes tax increases as a serious threat to its continued success, so it is no surprise that organizations which behave like front groups often rail against proposed increases.

Citizens Against Government Encroachment (CAGE) — CAGE has 'evolved' from a student-based libertarian group of McGill University to a corporate-funded lobbying cluster, still based in Montreal.

CAGE uses all of the tactics commonly employed by tobacco industry funded groups. The group first mobilized its 'supporters' to oppose a policy which would have eliminated the sale of tobacco products in a convenience store on McGill's downtown campus.⁵³ As is usual with industry front groups, CAGE became more active as legislators, in this case Québec's Minister of Health, announced their intent to implement more stringent smoke-free legislation.⁵⁴

CAGE is headed by David Romano, who is assisted by his brother Daniel and a few others, with financing provided by the Romano brothers.⁵⁵ CAGE has publicly voiced its support for Peter Sergakis, Voula Demopoulos and the small group of Quebec bar owners who are fighting Quebec's *Tobacco Act* in court.⁵⁶

3. Think Tanks

Think tanks offer another voice that can be used to shape public opinion and influence the democratic process. According to *Corporate Europe Observatory*, Martin Summers of *British American Tobacco* (BAT) explained (during a workshop for European think tanks entitled "Selling Yourself") how think tanks could attract corporate funding by demonstrating "*that you can persuade people to understand, promote and pursue pro-market ideas and policies*".⁵⁷ Summers even suggested that free market think tanks present themselves as civil society, thus enabling them to access "corporate social responsibility" (CSR) funding. Michel Kelley-Gagnon, the former director of the Québec-based Institut Économique de

⁵² Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association. New Toronto taxes on the table. Website text. 12 July 2007. www.crfa.ca/news/2007/new_toronto_taxes_on_the_table.asp. Accessed 9 November 2007.

⁵³ Brown L. Letter to Editor by CAGE McGill founder Lucie Brown, 28 March 2005. www.cagecanada.ca/media/Hyde_park_-_Sadies_-_LB_2005-3-28.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2008

⁵⁴ CAGE. Conversation with Minister Couillard. Events. 29 January 2005. www.cagecanada.ca/index.php?pr=Events. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁵⁵ CAGE. Donations. www.cagecanada.ca/index.php?pr=Support. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁵⁶ Lavertu Y. « Une contestation axée sur les droits individuels », *Journal du Barreau [Barreau du Québec]*, Volume 37, no 14, October 2005. www.barreau.qc.ca/publications/journal/vol37/no14/contestation.html. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁵⁷ Corporate Europe Observatory. Covert industry funding fuels the expansion of radical rightwing EU think tanks. July 2005. www.corporateeurope.org/stockholmnetwork.html#note23. Accessed 28 March 2008.

Montréal was also a speaker at this workshop.²⁷ In recent years, two Canadian think tanks have consistently defended pro-tobacco interests and at the same time argued against funding of health groups by government — the Montreal Economic Institute and the Fraser Institute.

Montreal Economic Institute (MEI)/Institut Économique de Montréal (IEDM) — The MEI presents itself as “an independent, non-profit, non-partisan research and educational institute,” which “endeavours to promote an economic approach to the study of public policy issues.”⁵⁸ Considerable financial resources have enabled the Institute to raise its profile as has naming former senior politicians to its Board of Directors. Recent appointees include former New Brunswick Premier Bernard Lord, and former federal cabinet minister Donald Johnston.⁵⁹ Maxime Bernier, a former member of the board, is Canada’s current Minister of Foreign Affairs. While boasting about receiving no public funds, the MEI admitted receiving 3.4% of its total annual budget in 2004 from the tobacco industry.⁶⁰ From 2002-2006, the MEI received \$135,000 in total contributions from Imperial Tobacco Canada (ITC) and the ITC Foundation.

During the same period, the MEI wrote opinion pieces, press releases and various other documents favourable to tobacco industry vested interests. Recently, it wrote how increased tobacco taxes stimulate smuggling;⁶¹ how smoke-free air quality was a matter of preference (not public health);⁶² and how governments were wasting taxpayers’ money by financing tobacco control non-governmental organizations, while mentioning nothing of the research showing the cost-effectiveness and health care cost savings associated with tobacco control.⁶³

MEI’s Pierre Lemieux was involved in the November 2007 contraband tobacco forum hosted by the Canadian Convenience Store Association, during which he presented a paper on the “underground economy” and recommended lowering tobacco taxes as the only practical solution to deal with contraband.

⁵⁸ Montreal Economic Institute. Homepage. www.iedm.org. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁵⁹ Montreal Economic Institute. “Donald Johnston and Bernard Lord join the Montreal Economic Institute.” Press release. 17 June 2007. www.iedm.org/main/show_mediareleases_en.php?mediareleases_id=149. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁶⁰ Montreal Economic Institute. « Coût des groupes de pression », Michel Kelly-Gagnon, *Les Affaires*. p. 14. 24 January 2004. www.iedm.org/main/show_editorials_fr.php?editorials_id=24. Accessed 2 November 2007.

⁶¹ Montreal Economic Institute. “Regional support: look out for the perverse effects of tax measures.” Press release. 10 May 2007. www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/May2007/10/c7176.html. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁶² Montreal Economic Institute. “Banning tobacco in public places – The government is going too far.” Press release. 20 March 2005. http://web.archive.org/web/20061003140853/http://www.iedm.org/main/show_mediareleases_en.php?mediareleases_id=71. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁶³ World Bank. *Curbing the Epidemic: Governments and the Economics of Tobacco Control*. 1999. www1.worldbank.org/tobacco/reports.asp. Accessed 28 March 2008.

Further evidence of the Institute's close ties with the tobacco industry is found in the fact that in 2005 it partnered with industry front groups *Mychoice.ca* and *CAGE* in organizing an essay contest for university students.⁶⁴ Photographs from the awards ceremony, which were posted on the Institute's website, showed spokespeople from all three groups with contest winners.

Fraser Institute — While not currently as active on tobacco as it has been in the past, this influential Vancouver-based think tank has a rather long history of disseminating pro-tobacco industry propaganda. The *Fraser Institute* convened/sponsored at least three scientific conferences on second-hand smoke (SHS) and published a book funded by the industry.⁶⁵ Many, if not most, of the speakers it has invited to talk about tobacco issues are tobacco industry consultants: people who have accepted money from tobacco companies, and gone on to mislead the public with information contrary to the universally accepted science recognizing SHS as toxic. Through these initiatives, the *Fraser Institute* has lent its name and credibility to old tobacco industry ploys aimed at dismissing public concerns over SHS, creating controversy, and de-railing smoke-free legislation from coming into force.

From 2003 to 2006, the Institute received \$325,000 in contributions from ITC and the ITC Foundation. It takes little digging to be convinced that the *Fraser Institute* is still a strong ally of the tobacco industry, a case in point being its continued ties with John Luik. Luik is a tobacco industry consultant who has made several false claims about his academic credentials and hidden his contracts with the tobacco industry.⁶⁶ Though much has been said publicly about Luik's ties to the tobacco industry, the Institute still mentions none of it. Instead, he is portrayed as an independent contributing author.⁶⁷ Luik has received significant funds from the tobacco industry, including US \$155,000 to edit a book minimizing the value of generic and plain packaging as a means to reduce tobacco use.⁶⁸

Recently, the *Fraser Institute* described the Supreme Court of Canada ruling that recognized the constitutionality of legislation allowing British Columbia to recover health care costs (from domestic and foreign tobacco manufacturers who manufactured products sold in BC) as a

⁶⁴ **Montreal Economic Institute.** Concours de redaction organize conjointement par l'IEDM, Cage Canada et MonCHOix.ca. Évenement. www.iedm.org/main/show_events_fr.php?events_id=140. Accessed 26 November 2007. [No longer on-line].

⁶⁵ **Non-Smokers Right's Association.** The Fraser Institute: Economic Think Tank or Front for the Tobacco Industry? What Canadians should know about The Fraser Institute's junk conferences on risk assessment and tobacco control. April 1999. www.nsra-adnf.ca/cms/file/pdf/nfraser.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁶⁶ **Marsden W.** "Luik lied to universities about his qualifications." *Montreal Gazette*. 21 June 2001.

⁶⁷ **Fraser Institute.** Fraser Institute's website. Biography: John C. Luik. www.fraserinstitute.org/commerce.web/author_detail.aspx?authID=827. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁶⁸ **Marsden W.** "Luik lied to universities about his qualifications." *Montreal Gazette*. 21 June 2001.

demonstration of *“the power of governments to change the litigation process and the limits of the judiciary in preventing it.”*⁶⁹

⁶⁹ **Brown J.** The Fraser Institute. “The Pitfalls of Suing Tobacco Manufacturers.” The Fraser Forum. December 2005/January 2006. pp. 11-12. www.fraserinstitute.ca/Commerce.Web/product_files/Dec05ffBrown.pdf. Accessed 25 September 2007.

4. Philanthropic donations and contributions

Corporate donations can play an important role in shaping and/or improving a company's image. Through the *Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation*, Imperial Tobacco Canada (ITC) distributes a little more than one per cent of its annual pre-tax profits to registered charitable and non-profit organizations. Meeting this one per cent benchmark earns ITC the distinction of being an "Imagine Canada Caring Company," an honour bestowed on some one hundred Canadian companies that show leadership in community investment and commit to Imagine Canada's principles of corporate citizenship. ITC donated \$4.8 million in 2006, representing 89¢ per adult smoker in Canada.⁷⁰

What's in it for them? — Each year, ITC publishes a report listing its contributions by organization, province and city.⁷¹ While this is valid information, it also helps to give legitimacy to a much criticized industry, something they can point to when voicing their concerns with politicians and the media. The reports makes it easy to monitor donations and contributions made by ITC, but a simple Internet search using company names and the word 'donor' reveals that both RBH and JTI-Macdonald also donate to artistic/cultural associations, post-secondary institutions, and health-oriented charities.

Canada's principal tobacco manufacturers donate several millions of dollars annually to research and other charitable causes. Some might argue that this is a considerable amount of money, but it pales in comparison to the \$4.3 billion Canadian governments (and taxpayers) absorb in annual direct health care costs because of smoking related illnesses.⁷² Study after study has confirmed how tobacco products cause more direct and indirect expenses to governments, employers, and productivity losses to the economy at large, than the money they generate in taxes.

Some may argue that 'good' can come out of 'blood' money. Recent history demonstrates that accepting such donations usually ends up serving tobacco interests *at the expense of* public interests. Indeed, cigarette manufacturers use philanthropic donations as a political tool in the hope of promoting a course of action that is less detrimental to its bottom line.

For example, in 2002, the year when major campaigns to increase taxes on tobacco were underway and Quebec's Superior Court heard the industry's appeal of the Federal *Tobacco Act*, ITC sent politicians a letter along with a copy of its *Socio-economic Contributions Report*

⁷⁰ Imperial Tobacco Canada. *Let's Talk*. Social Report 2006-2007. pp. 2-3.

[www.imperialtobaccocanada.com/onewebca/sites/IMP_5TUJVZ.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO6YSMYQ/\\$FILE/medMD73WR_YQ.pdf?openelement](http://www.imperialtobaccocanada.com/onewebca/sites/IMP_5TUJVZ.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO6YSMYQ/$FILE/medMD73WR_YQ.pdf?openelement). Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁷¹ Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation. For the latest report see Donation Recipients 2006, available at: www.foundationimperialtobacco.ca/eabout/donations.htm#. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁷² Rehm J, *et al.* "The Costs of Substance Abuse in Canada 2002: Highlights." Canadian Center of Substance Abuse, Ottawa. March 2006. www.ccsa.ca/NR/rdonlyres/18F3415E-2CAC-4D21-86E2-CEE549EC47A9/0/ccsa0113322006.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2008.

as alleged proof that the company is “*having a positive impact on society as a whole.*”⁷³ The letter points out that its donations improve health care for the elderly and increase both educational opportunities for young adults and access to the arts. The letter goes on to state that “*a growing need for resources in the above sectors, as well as many others, will make it all the more necessary for governments and corporations to work together*” to make a difference. This implies that governments should avoid enacting tobacco control legislation and regulations because it might deprive the company of profits which are being donated to help needy sectors of society.

Similarly in February 2005, ITC’s Vice-President of Corporate Affairs sent a letter to senior regional health officers across Québec.⁷⁴ The letter tells of the \$8.8 million worth of “*no-strings attached*” donations that it distributed in 2003. The letter coincided with the end of the public consultation period on amendments to the Québec *Tobacco Act*.

Artistic and cultural associations or events — From 1971 to 2003, the du Maurier Arts Council donated some \$60 million in funding to arts groups, major jazz festivals and cultural events across the country. It was disbanded in 2003 as a result of the federal ban on sponsorship promotions. In 2005 Imperial’s financial support for the arts and culture was brought under the umbrella of its newly-created Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation, which also funds initiatives in human services and post-secondary education. In 2006, the ITC Foundation provided \$2.15 million to 255 arts and cultural groups, making it one of the largest sources of private sector funding of the arts in Canada.⁷⁵ Donations to registered non-profit professional arts organizations are made through two programs: the *Imperial Tobacco Canada Arts Council Program* (for organizations whose annual revenues total less than \$1.5 million) and the *Imperial Tobacco Canada Arts Fund Program* (for organizations whose revenue exceed \$1.5 million.⁷⁶ Recent recipients include the *Royal Winnipeg Ballet*, the *National Gallery of Canada Foundation*, the *Shaw Festival*, the *Montréal Opera*, and the *Ottawa International Jazz Festival*, as well as festivals and arts councils in small communities all over Canada.⁷⁷ Donations to the arts and cultural sector give the industry considerable visibility and legitimacy — most people attending an event will peruse the programme and see the names of sponsors. These donations also provide tobacco companies with a network of often influential supporters in communities of all sizes across Canada.

⁷³ **Bexon R.** President and chief executive officer of Imperial Tobacco Canada, 2002. Letter to M.Parent, MLA from Nova Scotia. 25 September 2002. As seen on p. 8 of “TOBACCO INDUSTRY DONATIONS: How taking money from the tobacco industry helps sell more cigarettes, and costs more lives,” by CQCT, 2003. www.cqct.qc.ca/Documents_docs/DOCU_2003/DOCU_03_05_00_DonsENG.PDF. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁷⁴ **Fortier P.** Imperial Tobacco Canada. ‘lettre datée du 1er février, 2005’, signed by the Vice-president, Corporate Affairs.

⁷⁵ **Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation.** “Celebrating Creativity, Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation Supports 85 Arts Groups in Western Canada and the Territories.” Press release. 24 October 2006. <http://www.fondationimperialtobacco.ca/enews/pdfs/061024westcdn.pdf>. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁷⁶ **Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation.** Focus Areas. www.fondationimperialtobacco.ca/eareas/index.htm. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁷⁷ **Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation.** Donation Recipients 2005 and Donation Recipients 2004. www.fondationimperialtobacco.ca/eabout/donations05.htm. Accessed 28 March 2008.

Post-secondary education — The ITC Foundation contributed \$875,000 in 2006,⁷⁸ \$1.1 million in 2005,⁷⁹ \$1.6 million in 2004⁸⁰ and \$1.3 million in 2003⁸¹ to the post-secondary education sector. In 2005 recipients included McMaster University (\$60,000), Guelph University (\$100,000), and HEC Montréal business school. RBH also contributed to universities, including Carleton⁸² and the University of Western Ontario.⁸³ Ironically, JTI-Macdonald, a company facing criminal charges for smuggling and tax evasion, donates \$4,000/year (\$1,000 per year, per scholar) to the *JTI-Macdonald Corp. Accounting Entrance Scholarship* at the University of Waterloo.⁸⁴

Some argue that researchers should benefit from ‘academic freedom’ and that this might entail pursuing ‘no strings attached’ funding even if it comes from the tobacco industry. Previously secret tobacco industry documents, however, reveal that the funding often comes with strings. There are numerous cases where scientists and other professionals associated with reputable academic institutions have accepted payments from tobacco manufacturers to produce conclusions that are either favourable to the industry or at least less critical of the industry.^{85,86}

A survey, published in 2004, investigating tobacco industry contributions from 1996 to 1999, revealed that at least four faculties of medicine in Canadian universities received research funding from the tobacco industry.⁸⁷ Moreover, at least three of them received donations from the industry. The fact that several post-graduate institutions refused to disclose information regarding such donations led the authors of the survey to believe that

⁷⁸ Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation. Donation Recipients 2006. <http://www.fondationimperialtobacco.ca/pdf/fe2006/en2006.pdf>. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁷⁹ Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation. 2005 Donations Summary. <http://www.fondationimperialtobacco.ca/pdf/fe2005/e2005sum.pdf>. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁸⁰ Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation. 2004 Donations Summary. <http://www.fondationimperialtobacco.ca/pdf/fe2004/e2004sum.pdf>. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁸¹ Imperial Tobacco Canada. Socio-Economic Contribution Report, Supplement-2003 data. Page 2. http://www.imperialtobacco.com/onewebca/sites/IMP_5TUJVZ.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/76A412273BDFFEDF80256E1600625BB2?opendocument&SID=DTC. Accessed 25 September 2007.

⁸² Carleton University. Annual Donor Report 2006, Enduring Donors, spring 2007. http://magazine.carleton.ca/2007_Spring/1938.htm. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁸³ University of Western Ontario. 2005 Investors' Report. Ivey School of Business. <http://web.archive.org/web/20060924214123/http://www.ivey.uwo.ca/development/docs/2005+Investors.pdf>. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁸⁴ University of Waterloo. "Awards and Scholarships, Fall 2006." Faculty of Arts. <http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/scholarships.html>. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁸⁵ Schick SF, Glantz SA. Old ways, new means: tobacco industry funding of academic and private sector scientists since the Master Settlement Agreement. *Tobacco Control*, 2007, 16(3): 157-164. <http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/cgi/content/abstract/16/3/157>. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁸⁶ Hong M, Bero LA. Tobacco industry sponsorship of a book and conflict of interest. *Addiction*, August 2006; 101(8): 1202-1211.

⁸⁷ Kaufman PE, *et al.* Tobacco industry links to faculties of medicine in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 2004, 95(3):205-8. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?cmd=Retrieve&db=PubMed&list_uids=15191133&dopt=Abstract. Accessed 28 March 2008.

considerable sums were likely involved. In 2004, only Laval University and the University of P.E.I. had policies restricting donations and contributions from tobacco manufacturers,^{88,89} and the Schools of Medicine and Dentistry of the University of Western Ontario refused such donations altogether.⁹⁰ Several universities, including the Université de Montréal and the Université du Québec à Montréal, and university faculties (University of Toronto School of Social Work and the University of Alberta Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry) are known to have policies banning tobacco industry-funded research.⁹¹

Legitimate, non-industry-tied researchers from universities which do not ban tobacco industry funding are now beginning to experience difficulties accessing pools of research grant monies because of the controversy that surrounds the tobacco companies. For example, an addiction psychiatrist at the University of Alberta Hospital was refused funding when he applied for a grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research because the psychiatry department (within the faculty of medicine) could not sign a form guaranteeing that it was not concurrently receiving tobacco industry funding. Controversy surrounded the fact that U of A health researcher Carl Phillips was receiving a \$1.5 million (US) research grant over five years from the U.S. Smokeless Tobacco company. Phillips has said that “smokeless tobacco creates a very, very low risk of any life-threatening disease”⁹² and believes modern smokeless tobacco can reduce the risks of tobacco use by about 99% compared to smoking. Many people are concerned that the tobacco company money Phillips’ research is funded by may be influencing his conclusions and his statements on the subject of smokeless tobacco being used as part of a harm reduction strategy in tobacco control. Phillips denies these accusations, but the questions and concerns people raise seem legitimate because they are based on recent and long past examples of the tobacco industry funding questionable research/scientific conclusions.

Tobacco manufacturers have often also misrepresented health information provided by scientists in order to make their products appear less deadly. For example, in September 2006, *ADL Tobacco Inc.* (a Quebec based manufacturer) launched Azur, a cigarette purported to be less harmful than others because of its “*revolutionary biofiltre technology.*” The product launch featured a study by Elyse Bissonnette, a doctor affiliated with Laval

⁸⁸ Gagnon-Paradis I. « La Fac de médecine dit non au tabac. » *Impact-Campus*. Le journal des étudiants et des étudiantes de l'Université Laval. Laval University Student Association. January 2007. www.impactcampus.qc.ca/actualites/20070130/002617.html. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁸⁹ Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada. Tobacco on Campus: Tobacco Control Policies and Industry Marketing Among Universities and Colleges in Canada. Ottawa, May 2004. www.tobaccofreecampus.com/pdf/TobaccoControlonCampus-FinalReport.pdf. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁹⁰ Anderson J. “Faculty to Review Grant Policies.” Daily News Service. Western News. University of Western Ontario. 11 August 2004. http://communications.uwo.ca/com/western_news/stories/faculty_to_review_grant_policies_20040811432806/. Accessed March 2008.

⁹¹ Hamelin J. “Universities are slow to give up tobacco money.” Info-tabac Newsletter, March 2006. www.smoke-free.ca/info-tabac/March2006.htm. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁹² Ruttan S. “Tobacco company funds U of A professor: Researcher endorses chewing tobacco.” Edmonton Journal. p. A1. 8 November 2005.

University's Medical Faculty^{93,94} who was paid \$25,000 by *ADL Tobacco* for exploratory research.⁹⁵ The exaggerated health claims were reported by several media outlets. The doctor has since admitted to other university staff that she was unaware her study would be the highlight of a press conference promoting the Azur cigarette brand. This episode has led Laval University's Faculty of Medicine to reaffirm its commitment to refuse all funds and contributions from the tobacco industry and to state that faculty will be seriously reprimanded should they fail to uphold this policy.⁹⁶

In other instances, tobacco companies have made financial contributions connected less directly to self-promotion but that were nevertheless intended to make a positive impression on influential members of society, such as community and business leaders. A prime example was the U.S. \$500,000 research grant provided to Dr. G. Cherian, a professor and pathologist at the University of Western Ontario, by Virginia-based Philip Morris through a separate research foundation in Maryland. Cherian studies the effects of heavy metals on pregnant women and babies.⁹⁷ Although the University of Western Ontario's Medical School does not accept philanthropic donations from the tobacco industry, that policy is not university-wide.⁹⁸ This discrepancy enabled Philip Morris to affiliate itself with a university well-known for its medical faculty.

The tobacco industry still benefits from partnerships even if no strings are attached to the funding. It gains prestige and enhances its credibility by indicating that its consultants and partners are researchers affiliated with prestigious academic institutions. With millions of dollars in donations from Imperial Tobacco Canada alone, the tobacco industry has undoubtedly made allies within the prestigious network of Canadian universities, alliances that are strengthened each time a donation is accepted.

⁹³ **RadioCanada**, 2006. Nouvelles cigarettes Azur: Mainteant sur le marché, Nouvelles Saguenay/Lac-St-Jean, 29 Septembre 2006.
www.radio-canada.ca/nouvelles/regional/modele.asp?page=/regions/saguenay-lac/2006/09/27/004-cigarettes-azur.shtml. Accessed January 2007.

⁹⁴ **ADL Tobacco & les Technologies Biofiltre**. "Technologies Biofiltre and ADL Tobacco launch AZUR, a biofilter-equipped cigarette that diminishes the harmful effects of smoking." Press release. 27 September 2006.
www.newswire.ca/fr/releases/archive/September2006/27/c2473.html. Accessed January 2007.

⁹⁵ **Louis Mathieu Gagné**. « Une chercheuse a fait une gaffe. » *Le Journal de Montréal*. 10 November 2006.
www.canoe.com/infos/quebeccanada/archives/2006/11/20061110-060902.html. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁹⁶ **Gagnon-Paradis I.** « La Fac de médecine dit non au tabac. » *Impact-Campus*: Le journal des étudiants et des étudiantes de l'Université Laval. Laval University Student Association. January 2007.
www.impactcampus.qc.ca/actualites/20070130/002617.html. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁹⁷ **Anderson J.** "Faculty to Review Grant Policies," *Western News*. Daily News Service. University of Western Ontario. 11 August 2004.
http://communications.uwo.ca/com/western_news/stories/faculty_to_review_grant_policies_20040811432806/. Accessed 28 March 2008.

⁹⁸ **Johnson A.** "Teams, Tobacco and Tech Transfer." *Western News*. Daily News Service. University of Western Ontario. 5 February 2005.
http://communications.uwo.ca/com/western_news/stories/teams_tobacco_and_tech_transfer_20050203433338/. Accessed 28 March 2008.

Hospitals and other human service associations — In 2005, ITC made major donations to large hospitals and medical institutions in many provinces, including Queen Elizabeth Hospital, PE (\$10,000), Miramichi Regional Hospital, NB (\$20,000), Douglas Hospital, QC (\$20,000), l'Hôpital Maisonneuve-Rosemont, QC (\$20,000), McGill University Hospital Foundation, QC (50,000), Groves Memorial Community Hospital, ON (\$75,000), and Ottawa Hospital, ON (\$50,000).⁹⁹ JTI-Macdonald, while making headlines for the cross-border smuggling charges it is facing, donates to *Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders Canada*¹⁰⁰ and The Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation.¹⁰¹

In Canada, tobacco manufacturers regularly contribute to the United Way, the Salvation Army, the YMCA, and other highly respected welfare-oriented non-profit organizations. The contributions help the tobacco industry portray itself as a socially responsible company that works hard to improve Canadian communities:

As a 'people company' at heart, we believe that by helping to enhance the quality of life of Canadians, we are making a positive contribution to our country and the communities that are its lifeblood. ...

We are proud to be recognized as a 'Caring Company' by Imagine Canada. Through the Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation, we donate 1% of our annual pre-tax profits to registered charitable and non-profit organizations...¹⁰²

According to ITC's 2006 Corporate Brochure, its philanthropic activities are motivated by its desire to "make a concrete difference in as many lives as possible."¹⁰³ Such a statement applies as well in another context. With tobacco products being the leading cause of disease and death in Canada, the tobacco industry has been achieving just that by making a difference in the lives of the more than 37,000 Canadians who die of smoking-related illness each year and the loved ones they leave behind. ITC goes on to explain how it has "contributed to numerous health care facilities from long-term to chronic care facilities to teaching hospitals." By donating to hospitals, tobacco manufacturers promote the notion that they are part of the solution, when in reality they are a big part of the problem. Meanwhile, by accepting and soliciting donations from the tobacco industry, well-meaning hospitals and

⁹⁹ **Imperial Tobacco Canada Foundation.** Donation Recipients 2005. See: Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario. www.fondationimperialtobacco.ca/pdf/fe2005/e2005sum.pdf. Accessed 5 November 2007.

¹⁰⁰ **Medecins San Frontieres.** MSF Canada Annual Report 2005, Page 33. www.msf.ca/mainsite/pages/about/publications/files/2005_annualreport.pdf. Accessed 5 November 2007.

¹⁰¹ **The Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation.** Report to Our Donors 2006. Our Donors, \$1,000 - \$9,999. www.pmfh.ca/AnnualReport2006/Pages/Donors/DonorList5.aspx. Accessed 7 November 2007.

¹⁰² **Imperial Tobacco Canada.** Investing in our communities. Website text. www.imperialtobacco.ca/onewebca/sites/IMP_5TUJVZ.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/054913B3F513065580256E1600620D86?opendocument&DTC=&SID. Accessed 7 November 2007.

¹⁰³ **Imperial Tobacco Canada.** Our Community Investment. 2006 Corporate Brochure. p. 5. [www.imperialtobaccocanada.com/onewebca/sites/IMP_5TUJVZ.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO6TJRAZ/\\$FILE/medMD6TJRN_G.pdf?openement](http://www.imperialtobaccocanada.com/onewebca/sites/IMP_5TUJVZ.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO6TJRAZ/$FILE/medMD6TJRN_G.pdf?openement). Accessed 28 March 2008.

health institutions are in fact saying that tobacco companies are legitimate and responsible members of society. Such a context makes it more difficult for governments and regulators to impose further restrictions on tobacco industry products and their manufacturers.

Initiatives aimed at children —Given that cigarette manufacturers are known to market their deadly products to children, they have a vested interest in rebuilding their image as responsible corporate citizens concerned with child welfare and quality of life issues. Recent donations that stand out include those made to native communities and to prized family-oriented recreational venues.

First Nations Youth At-Risk (FNYAR) — Smoking among Canada's native communities is particularly high. In some communities, it is well over twice the smoking rates seen in non-aboriginal communities. ITC was a major financial donor to a one-year pilot project in 2001 called First Nations Youth Anti-Smoking (FNYAS), which used an "attack the causes" community-driven approach to tobacco control. As part of the initiative, JTI-Macdonald and ITC agreed to fund three grants worth \$75,000 each for pilot projects in three aboriginal communities. According to Imperial, the impact on smoking rates of those pilot projects was impressive. "In particular, the Onion Lake Band in Saskatchewan was able to demonstrate a decrease in youth smoking from 75% to 25% of the youth population."¹⁰⁴ Despite those dramatic results, FNYAS changed its name in 2002 to First Nations Youth At-Risk (FNYAR) and changed its focus away from smoking to other problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, suicide, and risky sexual behaviour. "The idea was that rather than focus on one 'symptom' [smoking] the method should be applied on a broader scale to create the desire among youth to avoid all forms of at-risk behaviour."¹⁰⁵ When FNYAS shifted away from smoking and morphed into FNYAR, ITC significantly increased its donation to the group to \$400,000. A closer look reveals that FNYAR's approach to dealing with smoking targets the individual and not the tobacco industry. Funding FNYAR means helping youth "*in creating the activities they are interested in and using their involvement to build up their self esteem and belief in their abilities.*"¹⁰⁶ However, research shows that approaches effective in reducing smoking rates among communities throughout the world include engaging youth and informing them about tobacco industry marketing schemes and practices, the addictive nature of tobacco products, the industry's targeting of youth, as well as implementation of measures to ban or limit secondhand smoke in public places and the imposition of high taxes on tobacco products. Effective tobacco control measures do damage ITC's image and profits, and so unsurprisingly, ITC refuses to fund or support such approaches.

¹⁰⁴ Fortier P. "Speech delivered by Pierre Fortier, Vice-President, Corporate Affairs, Imperial Tobacco Canada, to the First Nations Youth At-Risk Conference in B.C." 17 April 2004.
http://www.imperialtobacco.com/onewebca/sites/IMP_5TUJVZ_nsf/fb0c4cf10fb0028680256ad90058cf1e/bc087f53a91925a180256e160062d0a6?OpenDocument. Accessed 28 March 2008.

¹⁰⁵ FNYAR. "Governments and Private Sector Must Unite to battle Tragic Plight of At-Risk Native Youth: FYNAR welcomes Tobacco Company's challenge to expand successful help programme." Press release. 18 April 2004.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Montreal Science Centre/Centre des sciences de Montréal — ITC has made financial contributions to the Montreal Science Centre.¹⁰⁷ Located in the popular recreation area of the Old Port, the Science Centre is home to permanent and temporary exhibitions which attract families, school groups and tourists. The Centre is administered by a private-public consortium which includes the city of Montréal, the federal government and various corporations, including Imperial Tobacco Canada.

While ITC may maintain a low profile, the press conference that launched the previously mentioned 'Azur' cigarette took place at the Centre. It is difficult to imagine how a public venue which accepts tobacco industry donations can refuse the use of the premises (for a price) by another *legitimate* cigarette manufacturer. The *Ferrari (Marlboro) Formula 1* team also held its press conference at the Centre during the 2007 Montréal Grand Prix.

5. Concluding Remarks

Historically and up to the present day, cigarette manufacturers in Canada employ sophisticated and aggressive public relations, and propaganda strategies that work to advance their own vested interests. Tobacco manufacturers have set up front groups, financed think tanks and other organizations that behave like front groups, and given philanthropic donations to a vast variety of organizations and institutions, such as hospitals/human service organizations, post-secondary educational institutions, medical faculties and artistic/cultural associations.

Cigarette manufacturers resorted to these types of strategies, often wrapping them in the veil of 'corporate social responsibility', after their reputations were shattered when science, research and those concerned about public health revealed the true health impacts and costs of tobacco use. Previously secret documents which have emerged in litigation have exposed the industry's true behaviour.

In an attempt to change its image from corporate and social pariah to something more positive, the industry turned to philanthropy and donations to buy silence, credibility, and influence. It now uses all available means to try to demonstrate its value to society. Through its front groups, alliances with think tanks and organizations which act like front groups, philanthropy, and grants, the industry exploits numerous angles in an effort to sway legislators and public opinion in its favour. It buys goodwill, essentially trying to erase society's collective memory of its misbehaviour and fraudulent business practices. The industry does all this in order to slow down or prevent needed legislative reforms which would negatively impact its bottom line, but greatly benefit public health and society as a whole.

¹⁰⁷ Montréal Science Centre. Website Homepage: The Centre: Partners: Donors.
http://www.centredessciencesdemontreal.com/en/centre/centre_partenaires_donateurs.htm. Accessed 28 March 2008.

When the tobacco industry succeeds in promoting itself as a responsible corporate citizen, it ensures that people, communities, the media and elected officials forget the true nature of what it is in the business doing: selling addiction to the world's most deadly consumer product. To prevent this whitewash from being applied successfully, public health professionals should continue to keep a close eye on all the industry's front groups, think tanks, friends, and 'philanthropic' donations.