

GUIDELINES TO CALL/MEET WITH YOUR MP:

Sometimes a quick phone call to your Member of Parliament's office can be even more effective than writing a letter. As someone who operates a business in that Member's area (also known as a riding), you may even be able to speak to your MP face to face. If the MP is not available, ask if a member of their staff would be willing to discuss the matter with you, as they often have the ear of the MP.

- Introduce yourself as a business owner operating in the MP's riding. It may be helpful to provide the postal code for your business address.
- Give the reason for your call – to discuss the proposed plain and standardized appearance regulations under the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Act*.
- Ask whether the MP is available to meet with you in person. If so, request a meeting before October 31, 2018. The official consultation period on draft regulations closes September 6, 2018, but it takes time for the final regulations to be drafted. Regardless, the earlier you meet with the MP, the more time they will have to act on your requests.
- If the MP is unable to meet in person, ask to speak to them on the phone or to a member of their staff.
- In either scenario – over the phone or in person – start the conversation by asking the MP how familiar they are with the issue of plain and standardized appearance for tobacco products. If they are uninformed, explain the issue with (refer to the information above) and let them know that you can email them a list of materials (see list below).
- Briefly provide some context (how long you have been operating in the area, how many people you employ, what you expect the transition to cost you in terms of time/money).
- Let the MP know that this issue is important to you and will matter in the next election. Avoid revealing what party you voted for in the past, or what party you may be associated with now, as this may not incentivize them to respond to your requests.
- Be as brief as you can while outlining your concerns. It is just as important to pause and ask if they have questions as it is to listen and ask your own questions.

ISSUES:

- Without being able to easily identify one brand of cigarettes from another (ie. No logos, no protective wrap), we are putting our employees at risk by having their backs turned to the customer longer to find the “correct” brand. This can lead to more petty theft to more severe robberies.
- Packs will no longer show any logos. This will make it difficult for clerks to tell products apart and give our customers the legal product of their choosing. I am already losing business and customers to the illegal cigarette market and these regulations will make the problem worse.
- The slide and shell format will be required for all cigarette packages. Not only is slide and shell outdated and difficult to manufacture with existing machinery,¹ it is also the packaging of choice on the illegal market. The regulation should not cater to illicit tobacco operators; packaging should give legal operators the competitive advantage. Moreover, having to reconfigure my shelves to accommodate this last-minute addition, which was not consulted upon, will add to

¹ <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-imperial-tobacco-shocked-by-health-canadas-proposed-package/>

the cost of running my business. These costs were not considered as part of these draft regulations. [Section 37]

- The proposed compliance timeline is 3 months, which does not give retailers enough time to alter their establishments and educate their clerks. For example, switching from flip top to slide and shell packs requires new shelving, storage and planograms. In addition, clerks must be educated on plain packaging regulations for effective consumer interactions. We urge the government to extend the implementation timeline for retailers and distributors. [Section 77]
- Tobacco manufacturers will not be allowed to print customer call center numbers on their packs, which means consumers may issue complaints to the retailer. Consumers should be able to speak directly to the manufacturer for a resolution – but this requires manufacturer phone numbers to appear on the pack.

Whether on the phone or in person, ask the MP if they will share your concerns with the Tobacco Control Directorate of Health Canada or with any colleagues involved in the matter. Ask how they will share your concerns and if they need supporting documentation. Ask them to let you know the outcome via e-mail or phone.

End your conversation with the MP by asking them what help you can offer as they raise the issue with their colleagues.

Send a follow up letter within a week thanking them for their time. Be sure to summarize your initial points and remind them of any commitments that were made on the phone or in person. Ask for an update on what has been done and kindly request that the MP's office share any actions taken to address your concerns

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Below is a list of supporting documents you can reference in conversations with your MP. They contain relevant background information and insight into opposing views.

- Canadian Convenience Store Association Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health. Bill S-5: An Act to amend the Tobacco Act and the Non-smokers' Health Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. February 14, 2018.
 - <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/HESA/Brief/BR9684795/br-external/CanadianConvenienceStoresAssociation-e.pdf>
- Canada's Corner Stores Warn Government: Inconsistent Regulation of Cannabis and Tobacco Will Have Serious Consequences. November 22, 2017

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/canadas-corner-stores-warn-government-inconsistent-regulation-of-cannabis-and-tobacco-will-have-serious-consequences-659304503.html>