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France Gélinas

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La députée de Nickel Belt | MPP for Nickel Belt

Tuesday, August 19, 2014

Hon. Kathleen Wynne, MPP
Room 281, Main Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1
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Premier Wynne;

Yesterday, the Toronto Board of Health voted to ask the province to ban the use of e-cigarettes wherever conventional cigarettes are banned. The Toronto Medical Officer of Health has also called for banning the sale of e-cigarettes to those under 19, banning the sale of flavored e-cigarette products (frequently marketed to youth) and prohibiting e-cigarette displays in retail stores.

As the New Democratic Critic for Health and Long-Term Care, I support these recommendations and ask that you move swiftly to amend the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* to include e-cigarettes. This is simple a way to ensure that the good work done by the Act since 2006 will continue.

E-cigarettes, also known as vaporizers, are battery operated devices that mimic the use, appearance and often the taste of conventional cigarettes. If we want to dissuade new smokers and help current smokers quit, we need to prevent e-cigarettes from undoing years of hard work. The rapid spread of the e-cigarettes since they were introduced in Ontario brings a sense of urgency to this issue, and the current lack of regulation is allowing e-cigarettes to reintroduce smoking in social settings where other tobacco products have long been banned.

I would encourage you to look at the last private members bill I introduced to reduce the number of smokers and the incidence of smoking in Ontario. Since then, e-cigarettes have increasingly been marketed toward youth through targeted advertising and the sale of flavored cartridges. This trend is disturbing and serves to promote tobacco use in youth. Although the body of evidence is still developing, new research confirms what we all expected: e-cigarettes can act as a gateway to conventional smoking, particularly in youth. There is also emerging evidence that raises concerns about the safety of these devices for the user and also for those exposed to second hand vapor. E-cigarette parts, liquid and vapor may contain cancer-causing chemicals and harmful ingredients yet they are perceived as much safer than conventional tobacco products. Heavy metal particles have been found in e-cigarette vapor in levels akin to those in conventional cigarette smoke.

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I, like many other Ontarians, continue to raise concerns about the implications of e-cigarettes on tobacco control; specifically prevention, cessation and de-normalizing tobacco use.

The inclusion of e-cigarettes in the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* makes sense. By acting quickly we will curb the potential for these devices to undermine existing tobacco control legislation, and the potential that they will encourage youth tobacco use. Furthermore, a provincial approach to this issue allows for continuity in the approach to tobacco control and enforcement across Ontario's communities.

I look forward to your response,



France Gélinas, MPP
Nickel Belt
Critic, Health and Long-Term Care
New Democratic Party of Ontario

cc: Hon. Eric Hoskins, MPP; Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Toronto Board of Health
Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health; City of Toronto
Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC, Medical Officer of Health; Sudbury & District Health Unit