

Attention: News/Assignment/Health Editors

For Immediate Release

## **Ontario youth support making flashy tobacco products and packaging a thing of the past**

*Youth rally on Parliament Hill to show support for plain and standardized tobacco products and packaging in Canada*

**[OTTAWA, ON] November 9, 2017** – Part of what makes smoking appear cool and attractive to young people is product design and packaging. That is why Freeze the Industry, a group of health conscious youth dedicated to stopping the tobacco industry from marketing its products to young people, are holding a demonstration on Parliament Hill on November 9 to ask the federal government to pass Bill S-5, which will introduce plain and standardized tobacco packaging and products in Canada. The Bill is currently in the second reading phase.

“With most forms of tobacco advertising being banned in Canada, tobacco packaging and product design are one of the last tools the tobacco industry has to make their products appear cool or attractive to young people,” says David Patterson, health promoter and youth engagement coordinator, Hastings Prince Edward Public Health Unit. “Adopting plain and standardized tobacco products and packaging in Canada could go a long way in helping prevent a new generation of smokers,” added Patterson.

Freeze the Industry, along with numerous other health organizations across the country are calling for the inclusion of standardized packaging in the government’s plans to adopt plain tobacco packaging. Plain and standardized packaging would feature only the brand name and prohibit all promotional features on all tobacco packaging, including colours, images, logos, slogans, distinctive fonts and finishes. The size and shape of cigarette packs and the product would also be standardized, prohibiting specialty packages like slim and super slim cigarettes that target young women and make the health warnings almost illegible. Graphic health warnings would remain on all packages.

“For years the tobacco industry has been manipulating their product and packaging designs to downplay health risks and make them more appealing to consumers,” added Patterson. “Given that smoking kills half of all long-term users and that most people who smoke start before the age of 18, product marketing through packaging and product design needs to end.”

Australia was the first country to adopt plain and standardized packaging in 2012 and many other nations including the United Kingdom, France and others have followed suit. Countries around the world are adapting plain and standardized packaging because research shows it helps:

- Discourage young people from starting to smoking.
- Decrease the amount of cigarettes a smoker smokes.
- Increase the recall of graphic health warning labels.
- Encourage quit attempts.
- Reduce a relapse in those who have quit.

For more information about plain and standardized tobacco products and packaging visit - <http://www.freezetheindustry.com/>

### **About Freeze the Industry**

Freeze the Industry is a coalition of youth, young adults, and adults dedicated to stopping the tobacco industry from developing and marketing products that are enticing to youth. The group is calling for plain and standardized packaging on all tobacco products in Canada. For more information visit - <http://www.freezetheindustry.com/>

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