

Having worked to reduce tobacco use and its harms in Nova Scotia for 35 years, I applaud the government's stated intent for Bill 108 "to reduce smoking of any kind" through "smoke-free places [which] support a smoke-free culture and play an important role in reducing both tobacco use and exposure to second hand smoke".ⁱ

We need to expand the public's protection from second hand smoke and the normalizing of cannabis and tobacco use in Nova Scotia because we currently have the highest smoking rate in Canada at 20%.ⁱⁱ

Health Canada reports that many of the harmful chemicals found in tobacco smoke are also found in cannabis smokeⁱⁱⁱ. In 2009 the State of California added cannabis smoke to its list of chemicals known to cause cancer or birth defects or other reproductive harm.^{iv} People exposed to second hand cannabis smoke can have levels of THC detected in their saliva, blood and urine.^v

Six provinces have already legislated that there be no use of cannabis in public places. Another three provinces have prohibited cannabis use in areas frequented by children.^{vi}

Today I encourage you to make Nova Scotia a leader in providing protection from exposure to second-hand smoke for all Nova Scotians, particularly our children and youth.

You can do this by amending Bill 108 to **prohibit smoking and vaping in ALL "outdoor public spaces" in Nova Scotia where people gather, or at minimum, spaces frequented by children.** The Act defines outdoor public spaces as "an outdoor place to which the public is ordinarily invited or permitted access, irrespective of whether a fee is charged for entry".

Expanding provincial legislation in this way would make it easier for the public to comply with smoke-free outdoor spaces legislation because the rules would be clear and apply consistently across the province, versus differing by municipality. All Nova Scotians deserve the same protection from second-hand smoke regardless of where they live.

Currently in some public places where large public gatherings include children, there is no protection from second-hand smoke. I live in HRM and examples here include the Buskers Festival and at Natal Day and Canada Day events on the Halifax Waterfront.

With the legalization of recreational cannabis, unless this Act is expanded to include outdoor public spaces like these in HRM, my future grandchildren could be absorbing the harmful components of cannabis smoke as well as THC, the active ingredient in cannabis that gives you a high, by being near people smoking cannabis. This also sends the message to children that smoking cannabis is a socially acceptable behaviour. Does that seem right to you?

In terms of public support, 85% of Nova Scotians 15 years and older do not consume cannabis.^{vii} The majority of Nova Scotians surveyed in the past support smoke-free public spaces including outdoors on restaurant and bar patios, on beaches and in parks and playgrounds. The majority surveyed recently also support apartment owners being able to specify no cannabis smoking or vaping in the lease.

Because of the strong support for smoke-free spaces, and the majority of Nova Scotians do not smoke or use cannabis, smoke-free legislation is largely self-enforcing when combined with adequate signage and public education about the risks of exposure to various kinds of second-hand smoke.

Background

Creating smoke-free public places, both in enclosed spaces and in specified outdoor spaces, is a globally recognized best practice. Smoke-free spaces not only protect people from the harmful effects of exposure to second-hand smoke, but also serve to denormalize tobacco and cannabis smoking.

There is good evidence demonstrating that smoking prohibitions help people cut down and even quit smoking. The majority of people who smoke would like to quit. Having to leave an area to smoke becomes a conscious act. Once people are used to only being able to smoke at certain times, it can become easier to quit altogether. Thus this Act can help Nova Scotia reduce its high smoking rate.

According to the most recent *Canadian Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs (2015)* survey, fourteen percent of Nova Scotians and twelve percent of Canadians had used cannabis in the last year.^{viii}

It is common for people to mix tobacco with cannabis and smoke them together in a variety of ways. About one-third (31%) of cannabis users (who do not identify as tobacco smokers) report mixing tobacco with their marijuana.^{ix}

Given the highly addictive nature of tobacco, increased smoking of cannabis, especially among young people, could lead to increased tobacco smoking rates.

Canadian survey data also show that current smokers are more likely to try smoking cannabis (61%) than former (40%) or never smokers (19%).^x This co-use increases the risk of harm to people who smoke and undermines public health efforts to denormalize smoking behaviour and reduce smoking.

Decades have been spent legislating and educating to denormalize tobacco smoking. The legalization of cannabis could potentially normalize cannabis smoking and vaping, which could in turn re-normalize tobacco smoking and increase our already high smoking rates. Smoking is still the leading preventable cause of death.

For these reasons, I encourage you to expand this legislation to protect all Nova Scotians from the harms of exposure to second-hand smoke and to reduce current and future tobacco use **by prohibiting smoking and vaping of tobacco and cannabis in ALL outdoor public places throughout Nova Scotia.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sharon MacIntosh, Bedford, Nova Scotia

ⁱ NS Departments of Justice and Health and Wellness. News Release. March 27, 2018

^{li} Canadian Community Health Survey, 2001-2016. Canadian Smoking Prevalence, Review of Historical Trends, 2001-2016
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=wm#inbox/162913bfad251d8d?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1>

ⁱⁱⁱ Health Canada. Consumer Information – Cannabis (Marihuana, marijuana).
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/marihuana/info/cons-eng.php>.

^{iv} California Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment.
<http://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/proposition-65//p65single080516.pdf>.

^v Holitzki H., Dowsett L., Spackman E. et al. CMJA Open. Vol 5. 2017 *Health effects of exposure to second- and third-hand marijuana smoke: a systematic review* <http://cmajopen.ca/content/5/4/E814.full>

^{vi} Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction. March 15 2018. *Summary of Provincial and Territorial Cannabis Regulations*.
<http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/CCSA-Canadian-Provincial-Territorial-Cannabis-Regulations-Summary-2018-en.pdf?>

^{vii} Canadian Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs Survey, February - December 2015 Referenced Tables 11.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/canadian-tobacco-alcohol-drugs-survey/2015-supplementary-tables.html#a11>

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. CAMH Monitor 2015 (unpublished). Data presented by Kirst, Chaiton & Webster of the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit, 2014. *A common public health oriented policy framework for cannabis, alcohol and tobacco in Canada?*

^x Ibid.