

MEDIA STATEMENT

CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND ELECTRONIC DELIVERY SYSTEMS CONTROL BILL – AS A VAPER YOU TOO HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

Pretoria, 26 June 2023: The Vapour Products Association of South Africa (VPASA) welcomes the decision by the Portfolio Committee on Health to allow members of the vaping community, adult smokers, and concerned citizens the opportunity to make submissions on Tobacco Products and Electronic Delivery Systems Control Bill as recently advertised. The call for comments comes on the back of the recent presentation by the Department of Health (DoH) to Parliament.

The vaping industry completely agrees that sensible regulations should be adopted to control youth vaping in South Africa. Such regulations should be informed by the need to reduce the harms of smoking while protecting young people. “We have, on numerous occasions, called for the government to adopt a tobacco harm reduction policy informed by credible science as a basis for regulating the vaping industry. This requires an open mind that recognises that smokers are addicted to nicotine and for those who do not have the will or the means to quit, the objective should be to give them tools to reduce the harm derived from smoking. The current version of the Bill is not grounded on harm reduction and will do more harm than good in the fight against youth vaping and smoking”, says Asanda Gcoyi, VPASA’s Chief Executive Officer.

Not only will the Bill create a black market for vaping products, thus increasing the chances of young people to access vaping products, but the ban on communications and any form of marketing of vape products will also make it staggeringly difficult for the vape industry to convince smokers to switch to less harmful alternatives to smoking. The ban will condemn those smokers who cannot or do not wish to quit, and wrongly believe that vaping is as harmful, if not more harmful than smoking, to a life of smoking. In the process, it will give the tobacco industry an unassailable position as the only nicotine product available to nicotine addicts, with all the known harms that come with smoking.

“Our hope is that parliament will keep an open mind in reviewing the science which has overwhelmingly found that vaping is less harmful than smoking and should be adopted as part of an overall anti-smoking toolkit. Thus, Parliament should go beyond simply just calling for comments. It should also undertake an extensive review of the literature on vaping in order to arrive at a balanced policy not influenced by the ideological preferences of the anti-vaping lobby in South Africa”, adds Gcoyi.

It is crucial that all stakeholders take this opportunity to voice their concerns and provide inputs on the Bill to ensure the industry is regulated fairly.

For more on the Bill, and details on the submission process, visit <https://pmg.org.za/call-for-comment/1311/>.

For media enquiries, interviews with the CEO of VPASA, any of its members, or global experts on vaping please contact:

Thando Hlongwa
Account Public Relations Officer
Mobile: +27 62 055 8328
Office: +27 10 006 0344
Email: ThandoH@enamenconsulting.com