

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9

JUN 17 2016

Ms. Lesley James
Chair, Canadian Coalition for Action on Tobacco
Senior Manager, Heart and Stroke Foundation
Lesley.James@hsf.ca

Dear Ms. James:

Thank you for your correspondence of February 19, 2016, concerning the implementation of Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). I regret the delay in responding.

It was a pleasure to meet with you and other members of the Canadian Coalition for Action on Tobacco on April 18, 2016, to discuss your perspective on plain packaging of tobacco products and the renewal of the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy. I applaud the work of the Canadian Coalition for Action on Tobacco in support of tobacco control and in helping to prevent tobacco-related diseases and deaths in Canada. The Government of Canada values the important role of partners and stakeholders in addressing health issues facing Canadians.

As a party to the FCTC, Canada acknowledges and supports the obligations under Article 5.3 and the supporting guidelines for implementation. Health Canada aims to protect the policy development process from the vested interests of the tobacco industry. Generally, in the Canadian context, the primary channels of communication between governments and the tobacco industry are limited to technical discussions in regard to tobacco and tax-related regulations and litigation-related responses.

In its role to regulate tobacco products, Health Canada holds technical discussions on matters related to regulatory policy, and receives technical reports from the tobacco industry as prescribed by the *Tobacco Reporting Regulations* of the *Tobacco Act*. Under this Act, tobacco companies operating in Canada must also report to the Government on their research and promotional activities. The Department actively supports Canada's obligations under the FCTC, and has regularly informed its Federal Tobacco Control Strategy federal partners and the relevant departments of the provincial and territorial governments of their obligations under Article 5.3 of the FCTC.

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The Registry of Lobbyists serves to ensure transparency and accountability in the lobbying of public office holders in order to increase the public's confidence in the integrity of governmental decision making. Lobbying at the federal level in Canada is regulated under the *Lobbying Act*. It is illegal for corporations of any kind to contribute to political campaigns for electoral purposes. Some provinces also regulate lobbying. Furthermore, the *Lobbying Act* introduced a requirement that consultant lobbyists, including those representing industry, file a return with the Commissioner of Lobbying if they communicate with a designated public office holder under certain conditions. This registry is available at <https://lobbycanada.gc.ca/eic/site/012.nsf/eng/00035.html>.

Thank you for bringing to my attention the Philippines' strategy to protect its civil service from tobacco industry interference. Such information is of great use as Canada prepares for the seventh session of the FCTC Conference of the Parties this November in India. The implementation of Article 5.3 of the FCTC will be an important topic of discussion during these meetings.

I appreciate the suggestions put forward by the Canadian Coalition for Action on Tobacco on possible ways to strengthen Canada's implementation of Article 5.3. Please be assured that your suggestions have been noted and will be given due consideration. I encourage you to continue to share your ideas and perspectives on tobacco control with me. I also look forward to working with our domestic stakeholders, such as the Coalition, as we advance important tobacco control policies, such as plain packaging for tobacco products.

Again, thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Philpott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Honourable Jane Philpott, P.C., M.P.