

## **ASH NEWS RELEASE**

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### **ASH DEMANDS THAT TOBACCO COMPANIES DISCLOSE THEIR PROVINCIAL LOBBYISTS**

Edmonton - ASH is delivering registered letters to the CEOs of Canada's largest tobacco companies urging them to reveal their provincial lobbyists following a CBC television investigation into the sudden demise of proposed tobacco legislation last fall. The story revealed that the tobacco lobby was working secretly behind the scenes to derail a tough tobacco bill that was championed by health minister Gary Mar.

The CBC reported that Premier Klein's former executive assistant and chief of staff, Rod Love, has been working as a consultant for Canada's largest tobacco company, Imperial Tobacco. The CBC also reported that Hal Danchilla, a former communications director for the Alberta government, has been working on behalf of cigar retailers in the province.

"The tobacco companies have a long track record of working deviously behind the scenes at the highest levels of power to undermine public health" said Dr. Roger Hodkinson, honorary chairman. "We demand that these companies reveal all of their provincial lobbyists if they are truly committed to reforming their image as corporate pariahs" he added. "The public deserves to know who is working on behalf of tobacco companies and their connections to key policy makers within the Alberta government".

In the CBC investigation, Dave Laundry, the western vice-president for the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers Council admitted that the tobacco industry "employs people in every provincial capital to keep them abreast of what's going on in provincial government" and to collect "political intelligence".

"Why does the Alberta government feel the need to protect an out-of-province industry whose products kill 3,400 Albertans annually?" Hodkinson asked. "Instead, the government should be protecting Alberta youth from the predatory marketing practices of the tobacco industry" he added. "Resident Alberta industries like energy and agriculture are subject to far more provincial regulation than the tobacco companies" Hodkinson stated. "This deadly double standard requires a full explanation".

Alberta is the only province without any legislation to control tobacco sales and marketing. Alberta has no province-wide restrictions on smoking in public establishments and workplaces, apart from government offices. Eight provinces, excluding Alberta and New Brunswick, have banned smoking in various workplaces and public establishments.

The Premier's Advisory Council on Health recommended that the Alberta government adopt strong new tobacco laws to improve the health of Albertans and to reduce demands on the health care system. The government promised on repeated occasions to adopt all of the recommendations of the Mazankowski report. However at this time, provincial tobacco legislation appears to be nowhere on the horizon.

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