

Headline: A beginner's guide to smoking laws

Blurb: The vaping industry is up in arms because of two new proposed laws. A fight is bound to ensue, but tobacco control is a very particular game. This video will help you get to know the players ahead of public hearings.

- The vaping industry is up in arms because of two new proposed laws. One to regulate it, and one to impose excise taxes on vapour products and e-cigarettes.
- A fight is bound to ensue, but tobacco control is a very particular game, full of old betrayals and deep distrust.
- This video will help you get to know the players ahead of public hearings for each of the proposed bills.

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It's a big year for South Africa's vaping industry. The government plans two huge changes to their business..

1. Excise tax

This type of tax is levied on things people:

- Buy often or stuff that has a luxury price tag (such as cosmetics)
- Products which may be bad for their health or the environment (such as fuel or tobacco products)

Manufacturers pay the excise tax to the government. But it often results in a higher price tag for consumers.

In the long run, such levies can sometimes help people lead healthier lives.

For example: In South Africa, tobacco excise tax led to a third of smokers quitting in the span of a decade.

2. The Control of Tobacco Products and Electronic Delivery Systems Bill

If it goes through, this Bill will institute the same regulation rules for vapes, e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products as for traditional cigarettes.

The vaping industry doesn't like these proposals.

Before the public hearings for these laws begin, there are a few things you should know about the rules of the tobacco control game.

Rule #1: The public health lobby doesn't mix with the tobacco industry for any reason

Why?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) doesn't want the tobacco industry to have any wiggle room to further their business interests because their products are lethal.

Rule 2: There's a new player in the game

The fight against the harms of smoking used to be between public health and Big Tobacco.

But these days, there's a third group to consider: the pro-vaping lobby.

Who are they?

- Vapour product companies
- Tobacco businesses
- Public health experts
- Doctors

What do the organisations that make up the vaping lobby have in common?

They argue that vapour products offer people a way out of smoking traditional tobacco products.

The traditional public health groups disagree, and treat the vaping industry as if it were Big Tobacco.

Rule 3: The tobacco industry has played foul before

Big Tobacco started to undermine evidence of smoking's harm back in the 1950s.

The industry funded think tanks to produce pro-tobacco research and then flooded academic conferences with the fake data.

These tactics still persist in South Africa today:

- In 2018, Big Tobacco paid social media celebrities to tweet their disagreement with tighter tobacco control regulations.
- Philip Morris International paid a media personality to stream an industry event to their followers.

Rule 4: Some tobacco companies say vaping holds the key to end tobacco for good

Not all vaping companies are linked to Big Tobacco.

But all the biggest tobacco companies have stakes in these new products.

The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World is funded solely by Philip Morris International.

In 2019, The Foundation tried to set up a research unit at the University of Cape Town to study the use of vaping to end tobacco addiction.

The unit never got off the ground, but mere rumours jeopardised the funding of a prominent tax research group on the campus.

The vaping industry has also used tactics that harken back to tobacco's heyday.

For example, they used doctors to advocate for their products and used online ads to target young people.
