

Bills Committee on Smoking, Public Health-Amendment Bill 2019
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, HKSAR

Dear Chairman,

Re: The Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill 2019 (To Bills Committee)

I am against the ban of alternative tobacco products.

I am a smoker. I chose to be one at the age of 21. I am clear that there is no risk-free cigarettes, clear on the effects to others and my surroundings. I live with family, as you know rent and buying an apartment in Hong Kong is purely a dream. With inflation and cost of living going up, one would de-stress over a drink with friends and casual smoking to lighten the day to day grind. But I always hesitate for a second before I walk through the door to see my family, always worried about smells on my body. Nobody likes the smell of cigarettes.

A couple of years ago, whilst travelling on vacation I came across a product that would change this. A heated tobacco product (加熱煙) which doesn't release a smell that lasts long in my surroundings or on my body, no ash and overall just a good alternative option to enjoy tobacco. It wasn't available in Hong Kong at the time, but in the past few years I've come to see it commonly used in my social circle and on the streets. There was so much hope for me that this could be an answer to all my issues. But then the government decides to straight ban it.

Why?

Reading in the papers, the prevention of youth being able to buy the devices. If we have not proven already, it's quite difficult to buy a pack of cigarettes at \$59 at any convenience store if you're a child. Does this not apply the same for the Heat not Burn product? This is already something that the government has implemented strongly, we should put heat not burn under existing law not force consumers to buy off the illicit market.

So my question stands; where was the public's opinion on this? It seemed like we were given no chance what so ever a choice and forced to buy cigarettes. Where has the Food and Health Bureau considered the users? Do they want more ash and smelly smoke in the already congested HK air? I imagine all of the people using the product are now being forced to smoke cigarettes again. Well done, the smoking population suddenly grew again.

I suggest the government consider this in a public consultation. It's only fair to get a balanced understanding of the effects on the ban. Why is Hong Kong lagging behind other nations once again? Why is Hong Kong so narrow minded and cannot accept innovation that benefits society?

Please consider.

Best Regards,
Jonathan Yue