

An urgent message to Premier McGuinty

Ontario kids deserve your promised ban on 'Power Wall' cigarette displays in corner stores. Please keep your promise. For our kids.



Premier Dalton McGuinty

Dear Premier McGuinty:

Your promised ban on cigarette 'Power Walls' is missing in Bill 164. As you know, Bill 164 is the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* now before the Legislature.

'Power Walls' are those massive displays of cigarettes behind the cash register in virtually every corner store. Tobacco industry documents confirm what we know: cigarette 'Power Walls' are the most important advertising tool available to the tobacco industry.

Governments across Canada recognize the need to stop tobacco advertising aimed at kids. And tobacco displays are advertising. Premier, the products in these displays will kill a devastating one out of two of their long term users. As Toronto's Medical Officer of Health pointed out a few days ago, why do we expect kids to take the risks of tobacco products seriously when legislators allow them to be sold next to the candy and bubble gum in every corner store?

Premier, your 2003 Liberal campaign platform pledge said, "We will ban countertop and behind-the-counter retail displays of tobacco products." And we all applauded. We know how important this measure is to the future health of Ontario kids.

We also appreciate the leadership you have shown in bringing forward Bill 164 to honour your other tobacco control commitments. This legislation will give all workers protection from second-hand smoke. The right to a smoke-free workplace is a right that many white collar workers have enjoyed in Ontario for more than a decade. All workers should be treated equally when it comes to workplace health and safety.

But the 'Power Wall' reform was another critical promise. Tobacco companies spend \$88 million a year in Canada just to position their products behind the cash register. They spend another \$240 million on the cigarette displays and other promotions in convenience stores. Cigarette companies know convenience store marketing is the source of new child/teen smokers. The new starters are needed to replace smokers who quit. Or, tragically, die. In Ontario alone, there are 16,000 tobacco industry-related deaths every year. And the 'Power Wall' problem is getting worse.

"We will keep these commitments"

In 2004, while talking about promises to protect kids from the tobacco industry, Health Minister George Smitherman said:

"Take a look at the commitments we made to people last fall. We were very clear about what we intended to do. And in case you missed it, we said it again in the Throne Speech. Dalton McGuinty is, above all, a man of his word; his fundamental decency is his underpinning. We will keep these commitments. People's lives are at stake."

Premier, the lives of our kids are at stake. 'Power Walls' have been banned in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Aren't Ontario kids worth as much as kids in these other provinces?

We appeal to you to keep your promise to ban 'Power Walls'. No partial bans. No loopholes for the tobacco industry to exploit. The future lives of our kids are in your hands. Smoke-Free workplaces province-wide and the termination of predatory 'Power Wall' marketing will be your legacy. Ontario will applaud your courage, caring and commitment.

COALITION AGAINST TOBACCO 'POWER WALL' DISPLAYS

ALGOMA HEALTH UNIT • ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCIES • CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY (ONTARIO) • CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR TOBACCO CONTROL • CENTRE FOR ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH • EASTERN ONTARIO HEALTH UNIT • HALTON REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT • HEART AND STROKE FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO • KINGSTON, FRONTENAC AND LENNOX & ADDINGTON PUBLIC HEALTH • NON-SMOKERS' RIGHTS ASSOCIATION • NORTHWESTERN HEALTH UNIT • NOT TO KIDS! • ONTARIO CAMPAIGN FOR ACTION ON TOBACCO • ONTARIO PHARMACISTS' ASSOCIATION • ONTARIO PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION • OTTAWA PUBLIC HEALTH • ONTARIO RESPIRATORY CARE SOCIETY • ONTARIO THORACIC SOCIETY • PETERBOROUGH COUNTY-CITY HEALTH UNIT • PHYSICIANS FOR A SMOKE-FREE CANADA • PORCUPINE HEALTH UNIT • REGION OF WATERLOO PUBLIC HEALTH • REGISTERED NURSES' ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO • SUDBURY AND DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT • THE LUNG ASSOCIATION • TORONTO PUBLIC HEALTH