

Coalition québécoise pour le contrôle du tabac

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NEWS RELEASE

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SENATORS NOLIN AND KENNY VISIT MONTREAL IN SUPPORT OF PROVIDING TRANSITIONAL FUNDING FOR TOBACCO-SPONSORED EVENTS

Montreal, PQ – Tobacco control advocates Senators Pierre Claude Nolin and Colin Kenny presented their private member's bill, Bill S-13 – the *Tobacco Industry Responsibility Act (TIRA)*, to Quebec media this morning. As part of their cross-country campaign, they will also meet with local arts and health professionals to promote the *TIRA*'s goals. The proposed legislation aims to provide transition funds to arts and sports groups who will lose their tobacco sponsorships, and to fund education programs to prevent children from taking up smoking. The Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control was pleased to present the senators to reporters at a downtown hotel this morning.

"This Act is innovative because it promotes health concerns while offering an alternative for event organizers who currently receive tobacco sponsorships", commented Louis Gauvin, Coordinator of Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control. "We are pleased to see that at least some politicians in Ottawa are promoting a solution to the sponsorship dilemma that does not serve the interests of the tobacco industry. In fact, *TIRA* is very timely since the money could be used in conjunction with the Quebec government's recent \$12 million commitment to a replacement fund, in order to replace all tobacco sponsorship in this province."

Senators Nolin and Kenny plan to address local health and community groups later in the afternoon and convince them to enlist among the already impressive list of supporter for the proposed legislation.

The *Tobacco Act*, the federal government's most recent tobacco legislation, was passed in 1997. The Act bans direct advertising of tobacco products, and limits tobacco industry cultural and sport event sponsorships.

According to Senator Kenny, "While \$10 million a year for 5 years has been committed to youth programs, this is disproportionate to the magnitude of the tobacco epidemic. By the year 2000, Statistics Canada estimates that 12,838 Quebecers will die from smoking related disease and illness each year. My proposal attempts to correct the government's flagrant imbalance regarding the government's investment into reducing tobacco use."

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