

PRESS RELEASE
Immediate release

**New revelations regarding Canadian tobacco industry's secret strategies:
THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENT SANCTIONS THESE PRACTICES BY BLOCKING THE
INTRODUCTION OF THE DRAFT PROVINCIAL ANTI-TOBACCO BILL.**

Montreal, April 29, 1998 — The tobacco industry has been forced to hand over thousands of secret documents as part of a lawsuit under way in Minnesota to recuperate tobacco-related health care costs. The documents provide new insights into the industry's maneuvers to protect itself from litigation, its research on the health effects of smoking, and its strategies for recruiting young people.

At a press conference held in Montreal this morning, Quebec and Canadian health groups released to the public for the first time a selection of these confidential documents, particularly those implicating the Canadian tobacco industry.

In particular, the documents reveal that:

- Although *IMASCO Limited* likes to present itself as a holding with diversified assets, including tobacco, the company is, in practice and in law, a tobacco company that operates *Imperial Tobacco Ltd.* on a hands-on basis.
- *IMASCO Limited* was involved in a conspiracy to hide the risks related to smoking despite its own scientific evidence confirming these risks.
- Contrary to statements by the Canadian industry, *IMASCO Limited* conducted research on chemical and genetic means to manipulate nicotine delivery in its products.
- *IMASCO Limited* knew that at least one of its tobacco products had “particularly carcinogenic properties” with elevated risks that exceeded the risks of its other brands, but executives hid those risks rather than attempt to alleviate the problem.

According to Louis Gauvin, the spokesman for the *Coalition québécoise pour le contrôle du tabac*, the release of these documents is particularly significant for Quebec, given Premier Bouchard's reticence to allow the Health Minister to introduce his draft bill on tobacco.

“These revelations represent the clearest evidence of Canadian tobacco industry's impunity. The question we must now ask is: will the Premier continue to protect the interests of this industry by undermining the fight against smoking in Quebec?”

“Premier Bouchard's refusal to introduce the Health Minister's draft bill on tobacco suggests that this government is willing to tolerate the tobacco industry's despicable practices and their harmful effects on Quebecers.

“The smoking rates in Quebec are the highest in the country, as is the cancer rate. It’s no surprise that, among all the provinces, Quebec ranks last in terms of tobacco control measures. The government must act immediately to prevent the situation from getting worse.

“How long will the Premier continue to protect an industry that seeks only to boost the number of smokers and shows no concern for the devastating effects of its products on public health?

“Will the Premier let Quebec become the last haven for tobacco industry in North America, and consent to allow the industry to draw more and more of our young people with complete impunity?

“We can only hope that the release of these confidential documents will convince the Premier that the tobacco industry does not deserve the privileged treatment it receives in Quebec. We urge the government to act quickly to adopt tough tobacco control measures.”

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The Coalition québécoise pour le contrôle du tabac is a group of 660 municipalities, school boards, youth centres, hospitals, community groups, and health organizations in Quebec that are demanding a series of legislative measures to control tobacco.

