



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

# **PSSC MUST ENGAGE ALL PARTIES ON THE TOBACCO BILL**

**KUALA LUMPUR, 7 September 2022** – Malaysian Vapers Alliance (MVA), a local vape consumer advocacy group, has urged the Parliamentary Special Select Committee (PSSC) reviewing the Tobacco Product and Smoking Control Bill (Bill), to engage with stakeholders including the consumers as part of the review process.

MVA believes it is important for the PSSC to reach out to all parties including NGOs, consumers and retail businesses from the industry instead of just hearing a one-sided views from the anti-vape groups. This is to ensure the review process is inclusive and takes into consideration feedback from all parties.

At the last Parliament session, the Bill has been referred to the PSSC, which is chaired by the Health Minister, Khairy Jamaluddin for fine-tuning. The Bill also includes a generation endgame (GEG) policy, which will ban the use and sale of cigarettes and vape products for those born after 2007, for a lifetime.

**Khairil Azizi Khairuddin, President of the Malaysian Vapers Alliance** said “This Bill will have an impact on multiple layers from businesses all the way to consumers. And it has been one month since the Bill was referred to the PSSC, yet we haven’t seen the PSSC taken the initiative to invite businesses, NGOs for consultations. We urge the PSSC not to make any decisions without holding consultation sessions.”

“Further, it has been recently announced that the next parliament session have been brought forward and this leaves a very little timeframe for a thorough review on the Bill as well as taking input from various parties. In comparison, the recently passed anti-hopping law went through many months of consultations and discussions with inputs from various parties. To this end, MVA urges the PSSC to take time to hold consultation and discussions sessions with various parties instead of rushing for the Bill to be re-tabled in the next Parliament session.”

According to MVA, one of the key points for contention is that the Bill regulates tobacco and vape with the same restrictions and laws. The Bill also defines use of vape products as smoking and that vape products are categorized as smoking substance and smoking device.

"This is wrong. Vape products and tobacco products are not the same and the use of these products are totally different. Even World Health Organization do not equate these products to be the same. The Bill in its current form sends a very wrong message to the public especially to the 1.2 million current vapers in Malaysia."

“In addition, facts and science backed by international public health institutions have also acknowledged the harm levels of vape products to be significantly lower compared to cigarettes. Therefore, the Bill should not seek to regulate vape products in the same way as cigarettes.”

“By regulating vape and cigarettes in the same way, including imposing GEG ban on vape, has ironically ignored the principle of harm reduction and this could stop more smokers from switching to a less harmful product and push current vapers, many who are ex-smokers, to return to cigarette smoking habit.”

“In Malaysia, vaping has already changed the lives of many smokers for the better. Latest local study have also established that many smokers are using vape to quit or reduce cigarette smoking and this is a fact that cannot be ignored.”

A local study<sup>1</sup> by the ITC Malaysia Project that was published in March 2022 and funded by the Malaysia’s Ministry of Higher Education and the University of Malaya, found that as many as 17% smokers are using vape products in Malaysia where the top reasons for smokers using vape products is to reduce the number of cigarettes smoked (91.3%) and to quit cigarette smoking (87.9%). The study also said these findings are consistent with past studies from the US, Canada, England, and Australia on the top reasons for cigarette smokers in using vape products.

“Vape products can change many more lives of smokers if the Government introduces measures that acknowledges less harmful products such as vape and treating it differently from cigarettes,” **Khairil** concluded.

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### ***About the Malaysian Vapers Alliance***

*The Malaysian Vapers Alliance (MVA) is a nonprofit advocacy group that champions the use of vape products to help smokers quit. MVA’s work is dedicated to empowering consumers and representing their interests in various legislative, policy making, and rule-making arenas.*

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<sup>1</sup> Reasons for using e-cigarettes and support for e-cigarette regulations: Findings from the 2020 ITC Malaysia Survey (March 2022) [Reasons for using e-cigarettes and support for e-cigarette regulations: Findings from the 2020 ITC Malaysia Survey](#)