

Congratulations, Prime Minister, for standing up to Grand Prix intimidation

“This Formula 1 car is the most powerful advertising space in the world”

Grand Prix advertisement in *Tobacco Reporter* magazine

Dear Prime Minister,

Formula 1 head Bernie Ecclestone doesn't like Canada's *Tobacco Act*, because tobacco advertising is a very profitable venture for him. So he's been advancing the interests of the tobacco industry and threatening to cancel the Montréal Grand Prix in order to pressure Canada into weakening its legislation.

Prime Minister, we're heartened to see that you and your government are standing firm in the face of this attempted blackmail. Parliament first tried to ban tobacco sponsorship advertising in 1988, with the *Tobacco Products Control Act*. Ten years later, Parliament amended the *Tobacco Act* to give event organizers a five-year transition period, ending October 1, 2003, to find alternate sponsors. Virtually all have successfully done so.

Last year, in Québec Superior Court, the government defeated the cigarette manufacturers' challenge to the *Tobacco Act*. The evidence demonstrated that car racing, as an individual sport with elements of heroism and risk-taking, is an exceptionally attractive tool for selling cigarette brands to teenage boys. The judge concluded that there was no difference between

sponsorship and cigarette advertising and that

“there is incontrovertible evidence that advertising and sponsorship encourage people, especially adolescents, to consume tobacco products.”

Formula 1 racing is the single biggest platform for advertising global cigarette brands, contributing to glamorization of cigarettes around the world. A ban on tobacco sponsorships of international events is one of the key elements of the new global tobacco treaty, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. As one of the early champions and signatories of the treaty, Canada would not be acting responsibly if it now allowed cigarette advertising to be exported from Montreal to 300 million viewers worldwide.

By resisting misguided calls for 'quick fixes' that would endanger the health of children in Canada and abroad, you have demonstrated real political leadership. And by showing the world that public health takes precedence over Mr. Ecclestone's and the tobacco industry's commercial interests, you have confirmed Canada's global leadership on tobacco issues.

For this, we thank you.

CANADIAN COALITION FOR ACTION ON TOBACCO

Action on Smoking and Health, Alliance pour la lutte contre le tabagisme / Région de Québec et Chaudière-Appalaches, Association médicale du Québec, Association pulmonaire du Québec, Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Chiropractic Association, Canadian Council for Tobacco Control, Canadian Council of Cardiovascular Nurses, Canadian Dental Association, Canadian Lung Association, Canadian Nurses Association, Canadian Pharmacists' Association, Canadian Public Health Association, Canadian Society for International Health, Cancer Care Ontario, Clean Air Coalition of BC, Coalition for a Smoke-Free Nova Scotia, Collège québécois des médecins de famille, Conseil québécois sur le tabac et la santé, Council for a Smoke Free PEI, Direction de santé publique de la Gaspésie et des Îles, Direction régionale de santé publique de Québec, Fédération québécoise du sport étudiant, Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada, L'Association des médecins de langue française du Canada, Manitoba Tobacco Reduction Alliance (MANTRA), Medical Health Officers' Council of Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador Alliance for the Control of Tobacco (ACT), Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association, Non-Smokers' Rights Association, Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco, Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada, Régie R.S.S.S. Lanaudière, Régie R.S.S.S. Saguenay - Lac St-Jean, Saskatchewan Coalition for Tobacco Reduction, Unité québécoise de recherche sur le tabagisme