



PO Box 90, Petworth, GU28 8BN

Clerk of the Tobacco & Vapes Public Bill Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Thursday 2 May 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association (TMA) the trade association for the UK tobacco industry which represents British American Tobacco UK Ltd., Imperial Tobacco Ltd., and Gallaher Ltd. (a member of the Japan Tobacco Group of companies).

My members and I are concerned that the proceedings of the Public Bill Committee examining the Tobacco & Vapes Bill are undermining Parliament's crucial role as objective scrutineers of legislation.

First, the composition of the Bill Committee. Despite leadership on both sides of the House supporting the Bill, 67 Members voted against it at Second Reading, expressing their concern that the legislation has serious flaws, and almost 200 Members abstained - presumably at least some felt that the Bill did not warrant their support. Yet, out of the seventeen members appointed to the Committee, sixteen voted for the Bill at Second Reading and one did not vote. Four of the Committee members are members of the Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) All-Party Parliamentary Group. The perspective of those Members who have reservations about the Bill have been completely sidelined.

Whilst there is no rule that the composition of a Bill Committee must be evenly balanced, to have a membership comprising of 100% of members who support the Bill (the one MP who abstained is a Vice-Chair of the ASH APPG) undermines even the pretence of objectivity.

Second, the make-up of the Oral Evidence sessions. Of the thirty-three witnesses called to give oral evidence, thirty-two represent either anti-smoking interest groups or health charities, or are public health practitioners, university academics, teaching unions representatives or government officials. Many of these organisations had first-hand input in drafting the Bill and therefore their views are well publicised. There is a solitary witness from a retail trade body (representing large retailers), and no witnesses representing independent retailers, uniformed law enforcement, hospitality or industry. All groups likely to be seriously impacted by the Bill, should it pass into law, and all likely to express concerns.

Throughout the passage of this Bill, no serious consideration has been given to the costs or negative consequences involved with its implementation. It is quite inexplicable that Parliament is colluding in this charade and resiling so completely from its duty of objective scrutiny.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rupert Lewis', with a horizontal line underneath.

Rupert Lewis
Director, TMA
rlewis@the-tma.org.uk

Cc: Members of the House of Commons' Committee of Selection