

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City  
SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

House Resolution No. 973



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**Introduced by Hon. Anthony M. Bravo  
COOP-NATCCO PARTYLIST**

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**A RESOLUTION  
EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN  
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO ADOPT HARM REDUCTION MEASURES  
PARTICULARLY THE USE OF ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR  
SMOKERS AS PART OF ITS  
NATIONAL TOBACCO CONTROL STRATEGY**

WHEREAS, cigarette smoking is one of the leading preventable causes of illness and death. Projections by public health experts using World Health Organization data show that there will be more than one billion smokers around the globe for the foreseeable future. Despite all the regulations and strict policies enforced by governments, people still find a way to smoke. E-cigarettes offer an alternative. It is based on the idea of harm reduction: we can help smokers to switch from cigarettes to products that reduce the risks of smoking. Public health experts predict that smokers who switch to combustion-free products can substantially reduce smoking and the risk of developing smoking related diseases and eventually overall population harm;

WHEREAS, Article 2, Section 15 of the 1987 Constitution provides that "The State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them";

WHEREAS, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, of which the Philippines is a State Party, defines "tobacco control" as "a range of supply, demand and *harm reduction strategies* that aim to improve the health of a population by eliminating or reducing their consumption of tobacco products and exposure to tobacco smoke."

WHEREAS, the Philippine Daily Inquirer reported recently that Dr. Konstantinos E. Farsalinos, research fellow at the Onassis Cardiac Surgery Center and the University of Patras in Greece, urged the Philippine government to create a regulatory framework for e-cigarettes that is based on standards that are reasonable, proportionate, and realistic. The newspaper quoted him as saying that these regulations "must be different

from regulation of tobacco cigarettes; otherwise, people may be deceived into thinking that e-cigarettes are the same as tobacco cigarettes.”<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS, the Philippine Star also reported that in a recent media forum here, Dr. Farsalinos noted that an appropriate e-cigarette regulatory framework is important to ensure product quality, develop better and safer products, among others. Quoting Prof. Michael Russell, a pioneer in the study of tobacco dependence, Dr. Farsalinos said people smoke for nicotine but die from the tar to bolster his claim that e-cigarettes are safer.<sup>2</sup>

WHEREAS, a study of some 800 patients conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health and the University of Massachusetts concluded that nicotine replacement therapies such as patches or gums had no effect on helping people quit smoking.<sup>3</sup> One of the authors of the study, Harvard’s Hill Alpert, said that “this study shows that using NRT is no more effective in helping people stop smoking cigarettes in the long term than trying to quit on one’s own.” The takeaway from this study is that while nicotine replacement therapies have no adverse use in the long run, it is not effective in making people quit.

WHEREAS, Public Health England observed that since e-cigarettes were introduced to the market, smoking prevalence among adults and youth has declined. Thus, there is no evidence that e-cigarettes are renormalizing smoking. On the contrary, it is very much possible that their presence has contributed to further declines in smoking or denormalization;

WHEREAS, World Health Organization observed that in one country (United Kingdom), where tobacco-control measures are very strong and electronic nicotine delivery systems use is popular and growing, it seems that smoking prevalence, cigarette consumption as well as overall nicotine use continues to decrease gradually... at least for the United Kingdom, renormalization as measured by prevalence of smoking is not occurring currently;

WHEREAS, the evidence in the United Kingdom does not support the theory that e-cigarettes are attracting minors. In their 2015 study, Public Health England found that regular e-cigarette use among the youth is rare with around 2% using e-cigarettes at least monthly and some 0.5% using it weekly. Prevalence of use (at least monthly) among never smokers is 0.3% or less;

WHEREAS, Cancer Research UK concluded that the “data on electronic cigarette use in youth suggests that e-cigarettes are not serving as a gateway to tobacco. It’s reassuring that rates of smoking in young people are continuing to fall at a time when e-cigarette use has been rising”;

WHEREAS, Public Health England stated that the constituents of cigarette smoke that harm health – including carcinogens – are either absent in e-cigarette vapor or, if

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<sup>1</sup> <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/891397/proper-regulation-of-e-cigs-seen-to-prevent-sickness-deaths>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.philstar.com:8080/business/2017/04/23/1692842/e-cigarette-regulation-needed>

<sup>3</sup> <http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/content/22/1/32>



present, they are mostly at levels much below 5% of smoking doses (mostly below 1% and far below safety limits for occupational exposure);

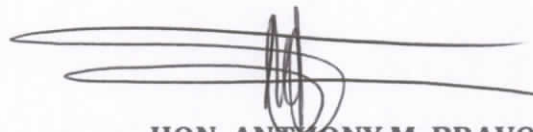
WHEREAS, UK Action on Smoking and Health stated in a report that “We have been unable to find any published scientific evidence of harm from indirect exposure to NCPs [nicotine containing products]. The MHRA [UK medicines regulator] review considered four studies looking at passive harm, or what we would call ‘secondhand exposure’. All these studies found levels of potentially harmful constituents in vapor at levels which are, by many times, lower than tobacco smoke, with one concluding ‘no apparent risk to human health’”;

WHEREAS, the Royal College of Physicians recommended that nicotine regulation should be designed to make e-cigarettes products a more attractive, available, and affordable option for smokers than cigarettes, to prevent, as far as possible, uptake of nicotine use by never-smokers, particularly children, and to make smoked tobacco products as unappealing as possible;

WHEREAS, Prof. Kevin Fenton, National Director of Health and Well-being at Public Health England went on record to say that “the evidence is clear that vaping is much less harmful than smoking and that e-cigarettes are helping many smokers to quit... Different approaches will be appropriate in different places, but policies should take account of the evidence and clearly distinguish vaping from smoking.”

WHEREAS, the Philippines can benefit from learning from the experience and studies in the United Kingdom which is at the forefront of the harm reduction exercise;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ADOPT THIS RESOLUTION URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO ADOPT HARM REDUCTION PARTICULARLY THE USE OF ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR SMOKERS AS PART OF ITS NATIONAL TOBACCO CONTROL STRATEGY.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and horizontal strokes, positioned above the printed name.

**HON. ANTHONY M. BRAVO**  
**COOP-NATCCO PARTYLIST**