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Lawsuit Exposes Cancer-Causing Chemicals from E-cigarettes

Oakland, CA-The national nonprofit health watchdog Center for Environmental Health (CEH) announced it has filed lawsuits against leading tobacco companies and other e-cigarette companies, including RJ Reynolds (Vuse brand), Fontem/Imperial Tobacco (blu brand), NJOY and 12 others for high levels of two cancer-causing chemicals found by independent testing of the companies' products.

CEH has also initiated new legal actions against four more e-cigarette companies, including Logic, a division of Japan Tobacco, and Fin, a division of Electronic Cigarettes International, a public company with \$100 million in annual sales.

In all, the nonprofit has launched legal actions against more than 60 companies for failing to warn consumers about exposure from e-cigarettes to nicotine and/or one or both of the two cancer-causing chemicals, formaldehyde and acetaldehyde, as required by California law.

Teen use of e-cigarettes is skyrocketing: among 8th and 10th graders, twice as many say they use e-cigarettes as compared to those who smoke traditional cigarettes, with 17% of high school seniors nationally saying they smoke e-cigarettes.

"The tobacco industry is banned from targeting teens in cigarette ads, but they and the rest of the e-cigarette industry use all of the banned tactics in marketing e-cigarettes," said Michael Green, Executive Director of CEH. "Parents should know that vaping presents real risks to young people. It's long past time for this industry to end its predatory and deceptive marketing."

In February, CEH sued 19 e-cigarette companies for failing to warn consumers about the reproductive health threats from nicotine in their products. In one settlement reached in those cases, the e-cigarette company Saffire Vapor agreed to legally binding restrictions on sales and marketing to teens, and prohibiting the use of unverified health claims.

Similar to the terms of the 1998 Master Settlement that ban practices that tobacco companies used for decades to recruit young smokers, Saffire has committed to take several steps, including:

- adopting child proof packaging;
- limiting the power settings on its devices to no more than 40 volts;
- preventing sales to minors by requiring identification checks, for both in-person and online sales;
- not selling flavored products appealing to children, including candy, fruit, cereal or other flavors;
- not using advertising that targets minors, including any ads that use younger models, cartoon characters, or art, fashion, or music that targets minors;
- not advertising in publications (including online media) that targets teens;
- not advertising near schools;

- not using Instagram advertising;
- not sponsoring athletic or music events;
- making no health or safety claims that have not been reviewed and approved by the FDA, including for example, smoking cessation claims, comparative claims about e-cigarettes' versus traditional cigarettes' safety, and claims about second-hand smoke.

"We are very pleased that Saffire agreed to take these positive steps, and we expect the entire e-cigarette industry will follow their example," said Green. "It's past time for the e-cigarette industry to end its targeting of our children, who should not be subjected to a potential lifetime of exposure to cancer-causing chemicals through these addictive products."

CEH purchased e-cigarettes, e-liquids, and other vaping products from major retailers including RiteAid, 7-Eleven, and from many online retailers and Bay Area vape shops between February and October 2015. Initial testing for formaldehyde and acetaldehyde on 97 e-cigarettes found that 90% of the companies had at least one product that produced high levels of one or both chemicals, above the state safety limit. A test on one e-cigarette found the level of formaldehyde was more than 470 times higher than the California safety standard.

Testing for formaldehyde and acetaldehyde was conducted by an independent lab accredited by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation. The two chemicals are known to cause cancer and are also linked to genetic damage, birth defects, and reduced fertility. Under California's strong Prop 65 consumer protection law, companies must warn consumers when their products expose users to chemicals that can cause cancer and/or birth defects.

The Center for Environmental Health has a nearly 20-year track record of protecting children and families from harmful chemicals in our air, water, food and in dozens of every day products. CEH also works with major industries and leaders in green business to promote healthier alternatives to toxic products and practices. In 2010, the San Francisco Business Times bestowed its annual "Green Champion" award to CEH for its work to improve health and the environment in the Bay Area and beyond.

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<http://www.ceh.org/news-events/press-releases/content/lawsuit-exposes-cancer-causing-chemicals-from-e-cigarettes/>