

## **GTNF 2015**

**Bologna, Italy**

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### **Session 14 – E-Cigarette Product Standards**

The e-cigarette product standards session of GTNF 2015 was one of the most informative of the Next-Generation Products breakouts. Several well-established vapor industry members shed light on the future of regulation and quality standards. The standards discussed included manufacturing practices (e.g., clean rooms, hardware materials), specific technologies (e.g., whether a heating coil is capable of overheating, safe batteries) and ingredients, including whether some flavoring agents pose a greater risk than others.

The session was organized by Patricia I. Kovacevic, general counsel and chief compliance officer of Nicopure Labs, an U.S. e-liquid and vaping device manufacturer. She formerly held senior legal and compliance positions at, among others, Philip Morris International and Lorillard. Kovacevic reminded everyone that vapor products will be covered by the same regulatory regime as cigarettes, barring a successful challenge to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) authority to regulate them. "Thus, [the] FDA's current behavior and thinking vis-a-vis conventional, regulated tobacco products—such as cigarettes—will be consistent with [the] FDA's future actions on vaping products, once these are deemed tobacco products," she said.

Peter Beckett, head of compliance for Nerudia, a vapor industry manufacturing and testing company, says that the more people are involved in developing standards, the better the outcome will be. "These should be performance standards, but they should not in any way stifle innovation," he said. Cynthia Cabrera, executive director of the Smoke-Free Alternatives Trade Association (SFATA), a U.S. vapor industry advocacy group, agreed that any standards should first and foremost not suppress innovation, a core element of the vapor industry.

Carl V. Phillips, chief scientific officer for the Consumer Advocates for Smoke-Free Alternatives Association (CASAA), a consumer advocacy NGO that supports tobacco harm reduction, said that the proper and legitimate role of product standards is to protect consumers' interests when they clash with merchants' interests.

"Merchants are legitimate stakeholders also, of course. The standards need to include the interests of merchants in terms of cost-effectiveness," he said. "However, that is also a consumer interest: Any needless costs will be paid mostly by the consumers. That is simple economics, though it is often misunderstood. Almost every cost imposed on a producer is paid by the consumer."

The experts agreed that batteries should be manufactured in a way that prevents explosions and e-liquids should be produced in ISO-type certified cleanrooms. Studies have also shown that ingredients such as diacetyl and acetyl propionyl should be avoided in the manufacturing of e-liquids.

One audience member asked whether it might be productive to have multiple standards created that compete with one another. Phillips said it could be a good idea in the short run, but he expected a

single set of standards for major producers to emerge eventually. He added, however, that there is room for fringe alternative standards for the enthusiasts, as is the case for many products.