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UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROSA L. DELAURO

3<sup>RD</sup> DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

March 31, 2014

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The Honorable Margaret Hamburg, Commissioner  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
10903 New Hampshire Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Dear Commissioner Hamburg,

I write in support of regulation of a new frontier in tobacco products: electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes). Disturbing trends show that a growing number of our nation's youth are using electronic cigarettes, which provide the latest method for delivering addictive nicotine into their systems. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) must take the decisive and important step of deeming these products as tobacco products and issue regulation that reins in the advertisement and sale to minors, as well as regulations related to the chemical composition of electronic cigarettes.

These electronic delivery devices use battery powered mechanisms to vaporize tobacco derived liquid nicotine that are inhaled and metabolized. Furthermore, they come in a plethora of flavors attractive to youth such as chocolate, gummy bear, bubble gum, and strawberry. Parents are keenly aware that these flavors invariably appeal to a child's palate. The latest data shows that in 2012 more than 1.78 million middle and high school students nationwide had tried e-cigarettes.

These nefarious new nicotine distribution devices are gaining in popularity as their advertisements penetrate the ecosystem of general advertisement. Many of the familiar, now illegal, practices by the tobacco industry have been resurrected in order to engage children in the e-cigarette market. In fact, e-cigarette ads have been featured in prime time television broadcasts.

Furthermore, market forces have driven down the cost of e-cigarettes dramatically, as well, making them more affordable, and thus more attractive to young people. Unlike traditional tobacco products, there are no federal age restrictions that would prevent children from obtaining e-cigarettes, nor are there any advertising restrictions. Celebrity endorsement, sports sponsorship, music artist promotion, and the appeal to a young, rebellious attitude have built an advertising approach that is strategically appealing to young audiences. Children, whose minds are particularly susceptible to environmental influences, are especially vulnerable to engagement with e-cigarettes, which could provide a gateway to nicotine addiction.

I understand that the FDA recently launched its new initiative to curb adolescent tobacco use featuring targeted messaging designed for at-risk youth. I welcome this critical youth education and prevention effort, but FDA must also move forward quickly to address the troubling trend in youth consumption of electronic nicotine devices.

The authority to regulate e-cigarettes is given to FDA under the Tobacco Control Act. I urge you to move quickly on this issue to ensure that all tobacco products are subject to FDA's oversight, including requirements for listing ingredients and to take steps that will ensure companies do not continue to sell or advertise to our nation's youth.

We know that nicotine is highly addictive and can have a severe impact on the cardiovascular system. Nicotine has been associated with elevated risk of heart disease and stroke. The FDA has the authority and responsibility to move quickly to regulate e-cigarettes and should do so immediately.

Sincerely,



Rosa L. DeLauro

Member of Congress