**Environmental effects of vaping in Ireland**

According toGovernment Minister Ossian Smyth, more than 1 million vapes are sold weekly in Ireland. There has been a significant rise in use of vaping products from men, women and children. The disposable vapes which come in many flavours including cotton candy, pineapple ice and many very appealing colours. These little batteries are less than €10 to buy which makes them pretty affordable compared to cigarettes. According to The Health Survey 2023, young people between the ages of 15-24, 20% girls and 16% boys are using vapes daily or socially. With over 1 million vapes been sold weekly in Ireland, that is now 10% of the population and according to The Irish Times (Pope, 2024) two-thirds saying they incorrectly dispose of their vapes.

In 2023, during National Spring Clean the Tallaght community council noticed a huge increase in smoking related litter, particularly vaping materials. Nowadays, it is hard not to notice the increase in used vaping products being disposed of incorrectly on our streets. On the 7th of November 2023, the institute of Public Health responded to a public consultation on disposable vapes launched by the department of Environment, climate and communications in Ireland.

According to PublicHealth.ie. (Health, 2023), This policy proposal it to address the environmental impacts of vaping which includes the ‘Ban on the manufacture, sale and distribution of vapes under the waste management act 1996, section 28’ and to establish a deposit and return scheme for disposable vaping devices. The institute responded to this consultation in total support of the ban from an environmental and health perspective due to the evidence of littering and leaching of toxic compounds.

According to PublicHealth.ie, there is also evidence that disposable vapes as a source of single-use plastics contributes to marine and land pollution, the greenhouse gas emissions associated with production and their explosion/fire risk. Vapes contain a variety of materials, ranging from plastics to lithium, cobalt, nickel, and manganese. Vapes and e cigarettes should be recycled to avoid further addition to landfill and damage to our environment, they should not be disposed of in the general waste bin. There are many options for recycling vapes including returning the vape to the shop you bought them in and they can be brought to a WEEE drop off recycling point or Civic Amenity Site according to mywaste.ie.

On the 11th of September 2024, The sale of disposable vapes is set to be banned. The minister for health, Stephen Donnelly received approval from cabinet to draft legislation. Could this ban drive people back to smoking cigarettes?

# Works Cited

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