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TOP 10

Tobacco Industry Actions

OBSERVATÓRIO
SOBRE AS
ESTRATÉGIAS
DA INDÚSTRIA
DO TABACO

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TOP 10

"TOP 10" Tobacco Industry Strategies in Brazil in 2024

To close the year 2024, the Observatory for Monitoring the Strategies of the Tobacco Industry at the Center for Tobacco and Health Studies of Fiocruz has selected the 10 most relevant strategies of industry interference in public policies in Brazil.

1. Tobacco Industry Lobby Against Tax Reform Advances

In 2024, the tobacco industry intensified its lobbying efforts with the Ministry of Finance and the National Congress to block tax reform measures aimed at increasing taxes on harmful products. Reports revealed meetings with the Federal Revenue Service that disregarded Article 5.3 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which protects public health policies from industry interference. These efforts sought to unduly influence the development of fiscal policies essential for discouraging tobacco consumption.

Source:

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/receita-federal-nao-da-transparencia-reunioes-sobre-impostos-com-industria-do-cigarro-e-viola-0>

2. Pressure on the Government Linking Smoking Reduction to Family Farming

Lobbyists and front groups from the tobacco industry attempted to convince government sectors that measures to reduce the number of smokers and the continued ban on electronic cigarettes could harm family farmers, especially tobacco producers.

Source:

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/lobby-convence-governo-que-reduzir-fumantes-e-nao-liberar-vape-prejudica-agricultura-familiar-1>



3. Lobbying and Expansion Strategies for Electronic Smoking Devices (ESDs) in Brazil

The tobacco industry has intensified efforts to influence regulations and public acceptance of electronic smoking devices (ESDs) in Brazil, despite the existing ban. Companies like BAT Brasil and Philip Morris International have adopted multiple tactics, including:

- **Pressure on legislators:** Lobbying targeted at lawmakers aims to ease regulations and pave the way for ESD commercialization, using closed-door meetings, economic arguments, and front organizations to legitimize their proposals.
- **Media partnerships and sponsored content:** Strategic collaborations with media groups ensure the dissemination of favorable reports promoting ESDs as "less harmful" alternatives while questioning the effectiveness of tobacco control policies.
- **Sponsorship of cultural events and disguised social initiatives:** Companies in the sector have sponsored events and discussions on diversity and inclusion to associate their brands with social causes, improving their public image and attracting new audiences.
- **Disguised marketing:** Reports indicate that Philip Morris has developed specific strategies to expand the ESD market, using influencer-driven campaigns and marketing actions disguised as education and innovation.

These practices violate FCTC guidelines and pose a threat to public health, potentially reversing Brazil's progress in reducing smoking rates.

Source: <https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/ex-souza-cruz-de-maos-dadas-com-grupos-de-comunicacao-na-defesa-dos-cigarros-eletronicos-2>

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/estrategias-da-industria-do-tabaco-para-influenciar-regulamentacao-de-produtos-novos-e-emergentes-de>

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/estudos-apontam-acoas-da-philip-morris-para-obter-apoio-e-ampliar-publico-de-cigarro-eletronico-0>

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/apesar-de-restricoes-philip-morris-patrocina-evento-cultural-na-parada-lgbtqia-de-sp-0>

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/interferencia-da-industria-da-nicotina-nas-politicas-publicas-0>



4. Opposition to the Ban on Additives

The tobacco industry has resorted to legal actions to delay the implementation of regulations banning additives, such as flavorings added to cigarettes and other tobacco products. These measures aim to reduce the appeal of such products among young people. The challenge before the Supreme Federal Court (STF) has raised concerns about the impact of delaying these regulations, as flavorings like menthol make tobacco products more attractive while masking their harmful effects.

Source:

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/stf-deve-manter-validade-da-regulacao-de-aditivos-em-produtos-de-tabaco-sem-overruling-1>

5. Use of Front Groups to Influence Public Policies

The tobacco industry has funded organizations that act as front groups to promote its interests under the guise of independence. These groups, often presented as farmer, scientific, or consumer associations, exert significant influence over political and regulatory decisions, aiming to weaken tobacco control measures.

Source:

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/estrategias-da-industria-do-tabaco-para-influenciar-regulamentacao-de-produtos-novos-e-emergentes-de>

6. Economic, Scientific, and Regulatory Manipulation

The tobacco industry exaggerates its economic importance to justify lenient policies and avoid stricter regulations. At international forums, it downplays its responsibility for environmental and health damage, arguing that regulation should be less punitive due to its supposed economic contribution. Simultaneously, it funds scientific studies that downplay the risks of new tobacco products, such as electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco. These often biased studies are used to sway public opinion and pressure lawmakers, reinforcing narratives favorable to corporate interests.

Source:

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/interferencia-da-industria-da-nicotina-nas-politicas-publicas-0>

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/agu-defende-em-evento-internacional-responsabilizacao-das-industrias-de-tabaco-0>

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/estrategias-da-industria-do-tabaco-para-influenciar-regulamentacao-de-produtos-novos-e-emergentes-de>



7. Interference in Public Health Campaigns

The tobacco industry has adopted sophisticated strategies to undermine public health campaigns warning about the dangers of smoking. A common tactic is spreading fake news and misinformation about the risks of products like electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco devices, positioning them as "less harmful" or as smoking cessation aids without scientific evidence to support these claims. Additionally, companies use social media to subtly promote their brands, employing influencers and hashtags to attract young audiences while circumventing legal advertising restrictions. These actions attempt to confuse consumers about the real risks of tobacco products and weaken educational and preventive messages from health authorities.

Source:

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/interferencia-da-industria-da-nicotina-nas-politicas-publicas>

8. Influence Strategies at the 10th Conference of the Parties (COP10) of the FCTC (February 2024, Panama)

COP10 highlighted divisions fueled by the tobacco industry's actions. Developing countries demanded greater financial support to implement restrictive policies, while industry-backed representatives from developed nations pushed for more flexible positions, arguing that strict regulations harm local economies and tobacco producers. This narrative helped undermine global consensus and delay stricter anti-smoking measures.

Source:

<https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/conferencia-mundial-sobre-controle-do-tabaco-termina-em-divergencias>

9. Political Lobbying for Electronic Cigarettes

Senator Soraya Thronicke has played a central role in Philip Morris International's lobbying efforts to ease electronic cigarette regulations in Brazil. Sponsored by industry-funded trips and events, the senator has championed policies aligned with corporate interests, such as the swift legalization of these devices. Although her influence has faced resistance and her proposals were ultimately rejected by Anvisa, her actions underscore the tobacco industry's political impact on public policies.

Source: <https://tabaco.ensp.fiocruz.br/pt-br/uma-senadora-nas-asas-do-vape>



10. Economic, Scientific, and Regulatory Manipulation

The tobacco industry inflates its economic importance to justify more lenient policies and avoid strict regulations. In international forums, it seeks to minimize its responsibility for environmental and health damages, arguing that regulation should be less punitive due to its supposed economic contribution. At the same time, it funds scientific studies that downplay the risks of new tobacco products, such as electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco. These studies, often lacking independence, are used to influence public opinion and pressure legislators, reinforcing narratives that favor corporate interests.

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