

# Govt puts out draft e-cigarette bill for public consultation

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**NEW DELHI:** The union health ministry has put out a draft e-cigarette bill for public consultation.

The ministry proposes to introduce the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production' Manufacture' Import Export Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement Bill 2019 in the next parliament session.

On September 18, the government promulgated an ordinance that banned sale, manufacture, distribution, storage and even advertisement of e-cigarettes or other electronic nicotine delivery

systems. Online sale and advertising of the products are banned.

"...the Bill is placed in public domain ([www.mohfw.gov.in](http://www.mohfw.gov.in)), as part of pre-legislative consultations to elicit the comments/views... The comments should be specific and focused on provisions of the Bill," read the ministry circular issued on Friday.

E-cigarettes, called the Electronic Nicotine Delivery Devices (ENDS), are increasingly being seen by smokers, with at least 900% growth in usage between 2011 and 2016 in the US.

The ordinance proposes a jail term up to 1 year and fine (or both) of Rs 1 lakh for first-time

offenders. For repeat offenders, term could extend up to 3 years and fine of Rs 5 lakh. Defaulting will be cognizable offence

E-cigarette storage shall be punishable with up to 6 months' jail or fine up to Rs 50,000 or both.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said the government would look at introducing the bill in the parliament soon.

Trade Representatives of ENDS (TRENDS) welcomed the notification. "We are glad to see the health ministry acceding to our request for a multi stakeholder consultation..." said Praveen Rikhy, convener, TRENDS, in a statement.