

Headline	Gov't to tax, regulate e-cigarettes	
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Gov't to tax, regulate e-cigarettes

The government will come up with the tax scheme and regulations covering e-cigarettes and other nontraditional cigarette products in line with plans of tobacco firms to sell them in the country.

“I got a letter from one of the companies saying that they are going to be introducing that product here. We are in conversation with the DOH [Department of Health] on how to handle it,” Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III told reporters late Friday.

Dominguez noted that there were now various types of products and technologies being marketed as alternatives to cigarettes such as vape and “heat not burn” devices, among others.

“We’re trying to see first where the technology is, where it’s going and how to address it. But definitely there will be regulation and taxation involved,” Dominguez said.

While these products are not cigarettes per se, Dominguez pointed out that these were “apparently designed to entice young people to start a nicotine habit.”

Dominguez said these products needed to be taxed as they still affected users’ health even if their manufacturers claimed that they had less impact on health.

“But there’s another problem—it makes you an addict. What you’re really ingesting there is nicotine. That’s not a good thing to be addicted to,” Dominguez said.

For the part of the DOH, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had already been tasked to come up with an administrative order (AO) for both electronic nicotine and nonnicotine delivery systems.

Duque said the new AO was expected to be finished in three to six months’ time.

The DOH chief noted that in 2014, the government already issued an AO covering these types of products, but when they reviewed this order recently, “it looks like it had been overtaken by events.”

“Vaping, the other electronic delivery systems for both nicotine and nonnicotine products—the 2014 AO cannot address all of these new technological developments, so we are reviewing it and in no time we will come up with the draft IRR [implementing rules and regulations] and after that hopefully get to approve it,” Duque said.

Dominguez said that at present, there were very few regulations on the importation of these products.

“The DOF [Department of Finance] and the DOH really have to study this because there’s a lot of science we have to understand, there’s a lot of different technologies and that technology is evolving very quickly—in a period of five years it changed entirely,” the finance chief said.

