



February 24, 2022

The Honorable Jim Wood, Chair  
 Assembly Committee on Health  
 1020 N Street, Room 390  
 Sacramento, California 95814

**Subject: AB 1690 (L. Rivas): Smoking Waste Pollution Prevention Act - SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Wood,

We, the undersigned, write to document our support for AB 1690 (L. Rivas), the Smoking Waste Pollution Prevention Act, which would transition California away from polluting, wasteful, and hazardous, non-health protective single-use smoking products by phasing out the sale of single-use cigarette filters, all-in-one non-rechargeable electronic vaping devices, and plastic cigar tips.

In 1964, the U.S. Surgeon General confirmed cigarette “filters” were ineffective at protecting smokers from diseases caused by smoking, and in addition, are a source of plastic pollution as they are discarded into the environment. In fact, according to the 2014 Report of the U.S. Surgeon General on the Health Consequences of Smoking and a 2001 *Monograph* from the U.S. National Cancer Institute, filters may provide increased risks for certain types of cancer. That 2014 Report asserted, “the evidence is sufficient to conclude that the increased risk of adenocarcinoma of the lung in smokers results from changes in the design and composition of cigarettes since the 1950s.”

In the nearly 60 years that we have known filters are ineffective, they have become one of the most littered products on the planet. Single-use smoking product waste is a toxic environmental pollutant and human health hazard that is extremely costly to manage and contains numerous hazardous and carcinogenic chemicals. Smokers and non-smokers alike do not know that almost all filters are made of the poorly degradable plastic, cellulose acetate, and most smokers report discarding them inappropriately into the environment as part of the smoking ritual. Cellulose acetate filters persist in the environment for decades and break down into microplastics that accumulate environmentally and biologically. Cigarette filters are the foremost litter item found on beaches and roadsides, amounting to 34% of the total beach litter collected in California. Several cities also report that cigarette butts are 10-20% of small litter collected in litter audits.

Less than 12% of Californians still smoke cigarettes, but cigarette butts are a significant public nuisance on beaches, in parks, in highly impacted urban areas, and in California waterways.

All-in-one vaping devices are electronics that are disposable by design and contain a lithium-ion battery that cannot be recharged. The battery and other toxic chemicals in them render them hazardous waste at end-of-life, and therefore they are not allowed in California's trash or recycling system. Because of inadequate public information about the toxicity of all-in-one vaping devices, Californians unknowingly discard them into household waste bins where they have the potential to cause fires and introduce hazardous chemicals in waste management systems and landfills.

California cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Jose, spend between \$4 and \$19 million on tobacco trash cleanup annually. Environmental volunteers across the state spend millions of hours of their free time trying to clean up this preventable litter from beaches and other natural areas. California communities and businesses are responsible to manage this ubiquitous source of hazardous waste in their neighborhoods. The 2012 federal Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act expressly grants authority for such actions to state and local governments. In addition, under the Trash Amendment to the California Clean Water Act, communities will soon be responsible for preventing waste larger than 5 mm from entering storm drain systems. This would include cigarette filters and disposable vapes. Finally, the Ocean Protection Council has addressed cellulose acetate filters as a source of plastic pollution, which is now a growing environmental priority for California and across the globe. Pollution prevention is far less expensive than end-of-life capture devices and clean-ups, which never capture the all the chemicals and pollution from these products.

Californians deserve protection from the unnecessary waste and chemical pollution from disposable filters, vapes, and cigar tips. These do not protect public health and are a source of plastic and chemical contaminants in the environment. For these reasons, we strongly support AB 1690 and urge your "Aye" vote when it is heard in the Assembly Health Committee.

Sincerely,

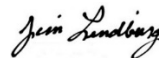


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