

REC'D SEP 21 2016



A City Problem with few Ifs or Ands,



**Yet Plenty of
BUTTS!**



**Progressive Alliance
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Fort Bragg**





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~ Democracy for All ~
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To: City Council, City of Fort Bragg

Re: Project StopButts - Report requesting City Action

Da: September 26, 2016

Worldwide, well over 5 trillion cigarettes are sold each year. The U.S. accounts for 300 billion of the total. Once smoked, what becomes of the butt?

Cigarette butts are the most common form of litter, as an estimated 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are thrown away every year worldwide. Most cigarette filters are composed of cellulose acetate, a form of plastic. The white fibers in a cigarette filter are NOT cotton, but a plastic that can persist in the environment as long as other forms of plastic.

Rather than being a protective health device, cigarette filters are primarily a marketing tool to help sell 'safe' cigarettes and are erroneously perceived by much of the public (especially current smokers) to reduce health risks. Slightly reduced per-cigarette intake of tar and nicotine is often offset by smokers inhaling more deeply or simply smoking more often.

“The Big Butt Problem – TPW (Tobacco Product Waste)”

Almost all cigarettes are sold with a cellulose acetate filter. About one-third of these butts never are properly disposed of but are thoughtlessly discarded onto the ground. From there, they are washed into watercourses and the ocean, to be eaten by fish, animals and birds.

Ultraviolet sunlight will eventually biodegrade the filter itself, but not what is inside. Filters take anywhere from 18 months to as much as 10 years to “degrade,” depending on where the butt is dropped and the exposure to sunlight. Meanwhile, in a 1997 study, more than 4,500 chemicals were found inside cigarettes and these chemicals and heavy metals (toxins) remain unaffected by the sun and are poisonous when ingested by any living being.

Tobacco companies tried to make fully biodegradable filters for years but were unsuccessful.¹ Cigarettes today commonly include pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides. If you want to name names of chemicals: ethyl phenol, nicotine, hydrogen cyanide, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, ammonia, acetaldehyde, formaldehyde, benzene, phenol, argon, pyridines and acetone, and Polonium-210. Of these, more than 50 are known to be carcinogenic to humans.

In California specifically, our Department of Public Health Tobacco Control Program puts it in these terms:

- Butts are the number one item found on California highways and 34% of total waste captured statewide
- Cigarette production requires one tree for every 300 cigarettes or one tree for every 1 ½ cartons manufactured
- Discarded butts have been linked to numerous wildfires and property damage
- State agencies spend over \$40 million annually in cigarette litter cleanup

“The Local Butt Problem”

About one-half of smokers do not consider the butts to be litter and feel free to discard them on the ground or even toss them from a car window. Cigarette butts are the most common form of debris collected from beaches and waterways during the annual Ocean Conservancy’s International Coastal Cleanups. Cigarette butts recovered from beaches are not necessarily due to cigarettes that are smoked at that location. Butts are dropped on sidewalks or thrown from moving cars; they then move to the street drains and into streams, rivers, and the ocean. In addition, since the early 1980s there has been increasing concern about the health consequences of passive smoking, and thus more smoking occurs outdoors, likely contributing to this chain of events.

In 2011, researchers at San Diego State University published their study that found lethal concentration (LC50) for both fresh water (fathead minnow) and saltwater (topsmelt) fish species exposed for four days was just one cigarette butt in one liter of water. A “leachate” (chemical soup produced by soaking butt) proved similarly toxic, with most of it emanating from the smoked cigarette butt and residue tobacco. Filters alone showed such toxicity.

“Clean-up ain’t necessarily cheap, but you can start right here in Fort Bragg”

In a review of litter cleanup project reports, the Keep America Beautiful Campaign reported that cigarette butts comprise from 25 to 50 percent of all collected litter items

¹ CORESTA, the tobacco industry’s international research organization, formed a ‘Cigarette Butt Degradability Task Force’ in the early 1990s to “develop a test to determine the rate of degradability of a complete cigarette butt.” The task force disbanded in 2000 after CORESTA found that it was “unlikely that the level of interest could justify the scale of the effort”, which would require more data collection and the development of instrumentation to establish a standardized test for cigarette filter degradation.

from roadways and streets. One report from a college campus estimated the cost of cigarette litter cleanup at \$150,000 for a single, two-week-long effort. No other economic impact studies have been reported. Their non-biodegradability means that they also increase landfill demands, add costs to municipalities' waste disposal programs, and create environmental blight in public spaces.

“Set up a brainstorm group to identify the extent of the problem & to propose solutions”

Form a task force of some kind to explicitly emphasize the importance of this problem and of finding locally-feasible solutions. Ask that body to conduct further fact-finding and to seek creative solutions. These might include:

1. Develop retailer responsibility ordinance for street-side pick-ups (Adopt-Your-CurbSide/Sidewalk)
2. Enforce and/or strengthen the City's litter ordinances & be willing to issue citations
3. Immediately purchase & install Seattle Surfrider cigarette receptacles/canisters (HOTYB: Hold on to your Butts program launched in 2014) or Cal Poly Surfriders' "Butt Biters" receptacles.
4. Evaluate the Model Tobacco Waste Act & other publications for ideas, inspiration and regulatory options
5. Consider a ban on sale of filtered cigarettes on the coast based on adverse environmental impact
6. Create local awareness and focused clean-up projects, especially at coastal trail areas

Sources consulted:

California Tobacco Control Program (Tobacco Product Waste Reduction Toolkit [2013] produced by Department of Public Health) & website www.tobaccofreeca.com
Cigarette Butt Pollution Project (www.cigwaste.org) & "Kick the Butts" initiative [based in San Marcos, CA]

Truth Initiative (www.truthinitiative.org)

Surfrider Foundation (<https://seattle.surfrider.org>)

National Center for Biotechnology (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

"Cigarette Butt Litter" newsletter (www.longwood.edu) [Clean Virginia Waterways project of Longwood University]

<http://saveourshores.org/what-we-do/reduce-cigarette-litter/>