



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, September 14, 2021

TO: City Council

FROM: INTERIM PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES DIRECTOR DI RENZO
CRISTY CASSEL-SHIMABUKURO, CONSERVATION PROGRAM
MANAGER

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING TOBACCO WASTE AS A PUBLIC
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT

STATEMENT OF ISSUES:

Tobacco waste continues to persist in excess throughout our community. To initiate a broader conversation on ways to lessen tobacco waste, an acknowledgement of the harm this waste poses to the environment and our community's health is necessary. This acknowledgement, via resolution, encourages the City Council to contemplate and advance policies to combat this waste.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution recognizing the negative impacts that tobacco waste has on the public health of Watsonville residents and the environment, with the intent to support statewide policies to reduce and eliminate future tobacco waste.

DISCUSSION:

Cigarette butts are the most prevalent form of litter found on beaches around the world, including the Monterey Bay. The Ocean Conservancy, which has sponsored global beach cleanups every year since 1986, has collected more than 60 million cigarette butts. Once littered on beaches, these cigarette butts will ultimately wash into the ocean. Cigarette butts are also ubiquitous on city sidewalks, parking lots, parks, playgrounds, trails, wetlands, and other public spaces.

Cigarette butts are not biodegradable. They are made of a plastic called cellulose acetate. Once littered, they leave not only that plastic behind, but also the toxic chemicals contained within the butts, including lead, arsenic, and nicotine. These dangerous chemicals then leach into our soil and water. Littered cigarette butts can also poison small children, pets, wildlife, and marine life when consumed.

Traditional cigarettes are not the only type of cigarettes leaving behind harmful waste. The rise in vaping has led to a subsequent increase in other forms of waste including toxic liquid

nicotine, plastic cartridges, batteries and other electronic parts capable of exploding or burning. These relatively new forms of waste are often incorrectly disposed of, and can harm the environment, wildlife, and humans.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

The proposed resolution supports the following Strategic Plan goals:

3-Infrastructure & Environment

5-Community Engagement & Well-Being

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

No alternatives are being recommended.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

None.