



**County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors  
Agenda Item Submittal**

**From:** Board of Supervisors: First District  
(831) 454-2200

**Meeting Date:** February 27, 2018

**Recommended Action(s):**

Adopt the attached resolution in support of Assembly Bill 2038 (Stone), banning butts to eliminate toxic cigarette waste, and direct the Clerk of the Board to distribute the resolution to our State legislative delegation.

**Executive Summary**

Over the past several years, the County and the City of Santa Cruz, in addition to the cities of Capitola, Scotts Valley and Watsonville, have adopted various tobacco control policies that have included prohibiting smoking tobacco products in public places, preventing youth accessibility of these smoking products, and bringing tobacco retailers into compliance. While all of these policy changes were adopted in an effort to address the harmful effects to public health, they cannot completely solve all of the negative societal and environmental impacts. An estimated 75% to 92% of smokers choose to illegally and indiscriminately litter their cigarette butts, which contain plastic filters. The end result of this harmful cigarette butt littering continues to pollute our beaches, rivers and roadways along with endangering the lives of animals. The litter also costs taxpayers an untold amount of money. In a response to solving this problem, it is recommended that the Board support the passage of AB 2308, which would ultimately ban the sale of single use plastic filters in California.

**Background**

The majority of cigarette butts are made from a non-biodegradable plastic called cellulose acetate. When discarded, these toxic plastic cigarette butts end up in our marine and urban environments, leaching thousands of carcinogenic toxins into the water and soil, and can take up to 10 years to decompose. The tobacco industry has been misleadingly marketing filtered cigarettes as the safer option for decades. In reality, the Surgeon General reports that filtered cigarettes are useless in reducing harm to smokers. Additional research found that filters have likely contributed to the rise in a form of lung cancer that occurs deep in the lungs.

Despite efforts from anti-litter campaigns, strict anti-litter laws, and strong anti-litter enforcement laws that include fines of up to \$1,000 and mandatory orders to clean up litter for no less than eight hours for each conviction; cigarette butts remain the single most littered item being collected on our highways and at organized beach cleanup events. An estimated 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are littered around the globe each year.

The California Department of Transportation estimates that it costs our state \$41 million annually to clean up costs. Volunteers working with Save Our Shores have collected more than 466,000 cigarette butts during clean up events in Monterey Bay alone. The Ocean Conservancy reported that in the past 25 years, volunteers have picked up nearly 52.9 million cigarette butts during the International Coastal Cleanup event held annually. Implementing AB 2308 would allow state and local governments to significantly reduce litter in our community, in addition to expenditures to our taxpayers for cigarette butt abatement.

According to the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's Office of Response and Restoration, fish, birds and other animals commonly eat plastic waste like cigarette butts and choke, or even to starve to death from a false feeling of satiation. From 2006 to 2008, the American Association of Poison Control Centers reported approximately 12,600 cases of children ingesting cigarette butts, especially those children under the age of six years.

### **Analysis**

Recognizing how cigarette litter endangers our oceans, wildlife and children, costs local governments taxpayers dollars, and given the additional data provided above, it is recommended that the Board of Supervisors support Assemblymember Mark Stone's AB 2308, Banning Butts to Eliminate Toxic Cigarette Waste. The proposed bill would prohibit the sale, gift, or furnishing of cigarettes with single-use filters. Since the anti-litter campaigns and strict penalties have not resulted in the abatement of cigarette butt litter, this bill would also completely take the butts out of the equation. AB 2308 would command strong anti-black market provisions that ensure proper enforcement to include a fine of \$500 for each violation.

### **Financial Impact**

None.

### **Submitted by:**

John Leopold, First District Supervisor

### **Attachments:**

- a Bill Text - AB-2308
- b Resolution in support of AB 2308
- c AB 2308 Fact Sheet - Banning Butts to Eliminate Toxic Cigarette Waste

### **cc:**

Senator Bill Monning  
Assemblymember Anna Caballero  
Assemblymember Mark Stone