

Board of Supervisors, Santa Cruz County  
701 Ocean Street, Room 500  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
Re: Ban on the sale of filtered tobacco products

July 1, 2024

Dear Supervisors Koenig, Friend, Cummings, Hernandez, and McPherson,

I am writing as a concerned citizen of Santa Cruz and a supporter of Save Our Shores in support of the adoption of a policy that bans the sale of all filtered, rolled tobacco products including cigarettes, cigarillos, and little cigars, in Santa Cruz County. This policy is critical to address one of the most persistent litter items in Santa Cruz County and across the globe, cigarette butts.

**Any personal stories or reasons you are in support added here.**

Cigarette butts are one of the most littered items on Santa Cruz County's riverways and beaches and have been for decades. Between 2013 - 2023, SOS has collected 439,358 cigarette butts from beaches, open spaces, and public areas. As a top littered item locally, we know that number is just a snapshot of the total cigarette litter that continues to negatively impact human and ecosystem health as our organization picks them up too or encounters them in our ecosystems.

According to a 2023 NOAA study that used community science data, an astounding 24.5% of all litter collected on the shoreline of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary between 2017 and 2021 could be attributed to smoking! Cigarette butts are made of cellulose acetate, a non-biodegradable plastic, which breaks into microplastics and bioaccumulates in marine organisms. Cigarette butts are toxic waste and leach dangerous chemicals such as lead, arsenic, and nicotine into the environment where they can poison small children, pets, wildlife, and marine life. They are also a fire hazard, responsible for burning 88,898 acres in California since 1980.

Local jurisdictions and conservation nonprofits, such as Save Our Shores, have borne the brunt of the cleanup work and associated costs to protect the sanctuary and its human and nonhuman inhabitants from toxic tobacco pollution while the tobacco industry maintains exorbitant profits. It is time for an upstream solution that holds Big Tobacco responsible for its own corporate pollution.

We believe that we have the community and local government support, the decades of litter data, and the regional strategy to justify a strong policy that favors our sanctuary and its people over the profit motives of an exploitative industry. **Please ban filtered cigarette products.**

Thank you for your continued leadership.

Sincerely,