

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: October 12, 2023

From: City Manager Department

Subject: Tobacco Waste

Recommended Action: Adopt a resolution recognizing tobacco waste as a public health and environmental threat.

Background: On May 16, 2023, the County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors passed a resolution recognizing tobacco product waste as a public health and environmental threat; in 2021, both the Santa Cruz and Watsonville City Councils passed similar resolutions.

In 2019, the Capitola City Council banned the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol.

On September 28, 2023, Vice Mayor Brown requested that staff bring forward a resolution for City Council consideration that declares tobacco product waste as a health and environmental threat.

Discussion: Cigarette filters (butts) are the number one item found on California beaches, including Capitola Beach, where they are washed into Monterey Bay and contribute to a common form of litter in the world's oceans. Cigarette butts contain cellulose acetate, a non-biodegradable plastic, which breaks down into microplastics and bioaccumulates in marine organisms. Cigarette filters are also toxic waste, leaching dangerous chemicals such as arsenic and nicotine into the environment. Improperly discarded cigarette butts can poison small children, pets, wildlife, and marine life, and are a fire hazard. Cigarette butts do not actually filter out harmful chemicals from cigarette smoke and provide no demonstrated health benefits to smokers.

Emerging forms of tobacco waste include electronic cigarettes or vaping devices, and the e-juice, cartridges, batteries, and accessories associated with them. Tobacco waste is a health equity issue, disproportionately found in lower-income communities and communities of color.

The City of Capitola is dedicated to combatting all forms of waste, including cigarette filters, along Capitola Beach. This year, Capitola entered a formal contract with the local nonprofit Save Our Shores, which includes quarterly beach cleanups. After each cleanup event, Save Our Shores will submit data to City staff outlining amounts and types of waste collected, allowing us to track our community's progress in eliminating and/or properly disposing of waste before it is left on the beach. The City also has cigarette butt receptacles installed on Capitola Wharf, in our public parking lots, along the Riverview pathway, and throughout Capitola Village to encourage smokers to properly dispose of cigarette butts.

Fiscal Impact: None.

Attachments:

1. Resolution

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Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk

Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager