

RESOLUTION NO. _____ (CM)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE RECOGNIZING TOBACCO WASTE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT

WHEREAS, cigarette butts are one of the most littered items on Watsonville's streets and waterways, where they are washed into the Monterey Bay and contribute to a common form of litter in the world's oceans; and

WHEREAS, cigarette butts are an unsightly blight on Watsonville's sidewalks, parks, playgrounds, recreation trails, and other public spaces; and

WHEREAS, cigarette butts are made of cellulose acetate, a non-biodegradable plastic, which breaks down into microplastics and bioaccumulates in marine organisms; and

WHEREAS, cigarette butts are not just litter but toxic waste, leaching dangerous chemicals such as lead, arsenic, and nicotine into the environment; and

WHEREAS, improperly discarded cigarette butts can poison small children, pets, wildlife, and marine life; and

WHEREAS, improperly discarded cigarette butts are a fire hazard, responsible for burning 88,898 acres in California since 1980; and

WHEREAS, cigarette butts are the remnants of a deadly product that is responsible for killing almost half a million people in the United States each year, including 40,000 Californians; and

WHEREAS, emerging forms of tobacco waste include electronic cigarettes or vaping devices, and the e-juice, cartridges, batteries, and accessories associated with them; and

WHEREAS, tobacco waste is a health equity issue, disproportionately found in lower income communities and communities of color; and

WHEREAS, Big Tobacco takes no responsibility for its toxic waste, forcing the physical and financial burden of cleanup onto local government agencies and volunteer organizations; and

WHEREAS, previous approaches including anti-litter laws, anti-smoking signage, increased waste disposal containers, and robust cleanup efforts have failed to solve the problem.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, AS FOLLOWS:

1. That the Council hereby recognizes and declares tobacco waste a public health and environmental threat to the residents of the City.
2. That the Council resolves to advance policy approaches to reduce or eliminate this toxic waste in our community.
3. That the Council requests the Mayor to write a letter to our local legislative representatives urging them to encourage the California State Legislature to ban plastic cigarette filters.
