

Objective 5: Minimize the secondary effects of tobacco and cannabis on people and the environment

Stop the Secondary Impacts of Smoking

Tobacco use in California is declining, but the secondary impacts of tobacco—including **secondhand smoke** and **tobacco product waste**—still pose risks for smokers and nonsmokers alike. Discarded cigarette butts spark **wildfires**, create **environmental health hazards**, and **cost millions** to clean up. Secondhand smoke exposes nonsmokers to the same **airborne toxins** smokers inhale. **E-cigarette waste** poses a new set of environmental challenges. Making California free from all tobacco harms means **closing loopholes** in clean air laws, creating **upstream solutions** to tobacco product waste, and conducting more research on the impacts of secondhand and thirdhand smoke.

Key Concepts: Upstream Solutions to Secondary Smoking Impacts

Secondhand smoke (SHS) is smoke or vapor exhaled by a tobacco smoker or e-cigarette user as well as “side stream smoke” from a lighted cigarette or other source of burning tobacco. When nonsmokers are exposed to SHS, they inhale the same harmful chemicals that smokers do. Secondhand tobacco smoke is known to cause cancer, and there is no safe level of exposure.

Thirdhand smoke (THS) refers to the gases and particles that linger on surfaces and in carpet, walls, furniture, and other materials long after smoking has stopped. People are exposed to thirdhand smoke when it is released back into the air or when they touch contaminated surfaces.

Tobacco product waste (TPW) includes discarded cigarette butts and packaging, plastics and metals from vaping devices, e-cigarette pods that contain vaping liquids, and other byproducts of tobacco use that have been littered or released into the environment. Many forms of TPW are non-biodegradable and contain toxic substances.

Upstream solutions are policies that place the responsibility for preventing and mitigating problems caused by TPW on the tobacco industry or manufacturers, rather than on end users. Research shows upstream solutions that will reduce TPW at the source are more likely to be effective than policies aimed at changing individual behavior, such as anti-littering laws.

Strategies

Support upstream solutions to prevent tobacco produce waste

Prohibit sales of all or some products, like filtered cigarettes, plastic-tipped cigarillos, pods used in vaping, and other tobacco products that are most often littered

Hold the tobacco industry or manufacturers responsible for covering the costs of removing tobacco product waste from the environment

Continue to collaborate with environmental groups to support upstream solutions and prevent tobacco product littering

Increase awareness of tobacco product waste

Reduce tobacco product litter through education and social norm change campaigns to increase awareness of the impacts of tobacco product waste and discourage littering

Support and publicize research on environmental and economic impacts of tobacco product waste

Reduce exposure to secondhand emissions from tobacco and cannabis

Regulate secondhand tobacco smoke and emissions from e-cigarettes and cannabis products as toxic air contaminants

Close loopholes that allow smoking in hotels, tobacco shops and smokers' lounges, hookah lounges, patient smoking areas of healthcare facilities, cabs of trucks or tractors, theatrical stages, and other places exempted from clean air restrictions

Prevent secondhand smoke exposure by strengthening smoke-free policies to include more workplaces, outdoor public spaces, and multi-unit housing

Review secondhand smoke laws and policies to find best practices for improving compliance

Find the facts: thirdhand smoke and cannabis emissions

Support research into THS, the residue that accumulates on carpets, furniture, clothing, and other surfaces after tobacco or cannabis is used

Research how THS exposure affects children and adults, how this may vary according to socioeconomic demographics, and how it may contribute to health disparities

Explore ways to stop THS exposure, including prohibitions on smoking in multi-unit housing and required disclosure of tobacco use by previous tenants in rental agreements