

# BORN TO BREATHE TOBACCO FACT SHEETS

**Tobacco doesn't just negatively impact the health of individuals, it also endangers the health of the environment.<sup>1</sup>**



An estimated **766,571** metric tons of cigarette butts make their way into the environment every year.<sup>1</sup>

*When e-cigarette and cigarette waste isn't disposed of properly, it makes its way into the environment where it ends up polluting water, air, and land with toxic chemicals, heavy metals and residual nicotine.<sup>1</sup>*

## Cigarettes<sup>1</sup>

- Cigarette butts comprise 30%-40% of items collected in annual coastal/urban cleanups.
- Cigarette butts are the most prominently littered item on U.S. roadways, retail areas, storm drains, loading docks, construction sites and recreational areas.
- In 2019, cigarette butts were the most littered item in U.S. beaches and waterways, with close to a million (900,178) pieces collected.
- 4,211,962 cigarette butts were collected on beaches and waterways globally in 2019, making them the world's second most common type of litter after food wrappers.
- 12,089 cigarette lighters, 58,672 cigar tips and 33,865 tobacco packages or wrappers were removed from U.S. waterways in 2015.
- 86% of smokers consider cigarette butts to be litter, but 75% of smokers throw them on the ground or out of a car window.
- Smokers litter as many as 65% of their cigarette butts.
- Preliminary studies show that organic compounds (such as nicotine, pesticide residues and metal) seep from cigarette butts into aquatic ecosystems, becoming acutely toxic to fish and microorganisms.

## E-Cigarettes<sup>1</sup>

- E-cigarette-related waste is potentially a more serious environmental threat than cigarette butts because it contains metal, circuitry, single-use plastic cartridges, batteries and toxic chemicals in e-liquids.
- E-cigarette manufacturers do not provide guidance to consumers on how to dispose of used devices or pod/cartridge products, and there are no receptacles or specific processes in place.
- Lithium-ion batteries in e-cigarettes have been known to explode and cause fires in garbage trucks and waste management plants if damaged or exposed to extreme heat. According to a California survey, 56% of the fires at waste facilities between 2016-2018 were reported to have been caused by batteries, mostly lithium-ion ones.
- Incompletely used liquid cartridges and refills contain nicotine salts and heavy metals, which can leach into soil and waterways or be ingested by wildlife.
- Before lithium-ion batteries can be placed in the trash, they need to be fully discharged and cooled, submerged in cold saltwater for two weeks — covered securely with a lid — and wrapped in newspaper.

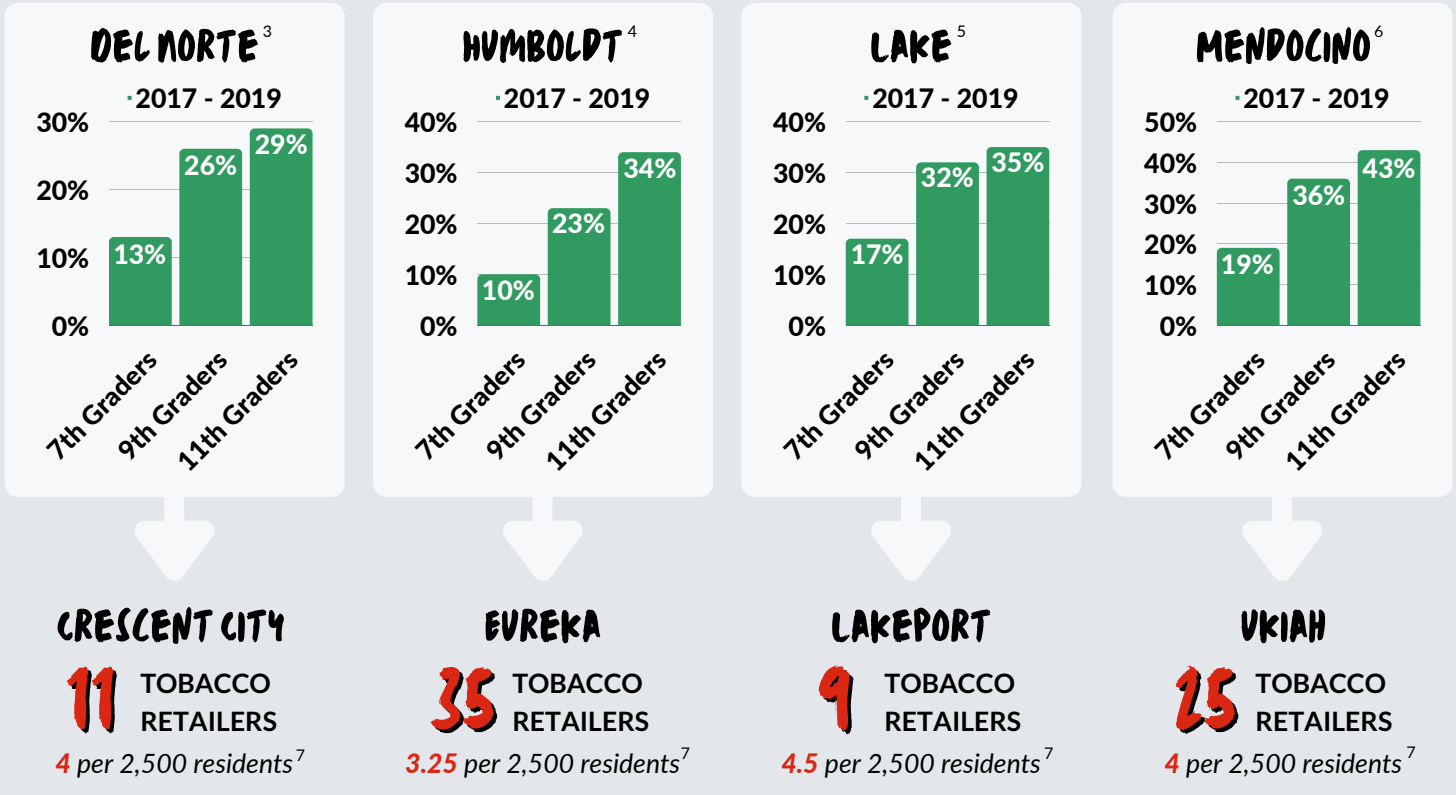


**"Tobacco manufacturers need to be held responsible for the extreme amounts of waste that their products create." - Truth Initiative**

## Local Statistics

Exposure to tobacco marketing in stores increases tobacco experimentation and use by youth and is more powerful than peer pressure. Middle school youth exposed to tobacco products in a retail setting multiple times per week are twice as likely to start smoking.<sup>2</sup>

### YOUTH THAT HAVE EVER TRIED E-CIGARETTES.



## Call To Action

- Smart tobacco policies can help create an environment where community leaders and families feel empowered to reject the culture of tobacco use and choose healthier, tobacco-free futures.
- Local retail licensing policies can reduce youth access to tobacco by banning the sale of all flavored tobacco products, address retail density, tobacco displays and advertising proximity to youth friendly areas, and tobacco free pharmacies.
- Ask communities to pass smoke free policies to protect community spaces such as fairs, rodeos, and shared living spaces such as apartment complexes.
- Smokefree outdoor air laws can protect rural Californians from the secondhand smoke they want to avoid.



1. <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/harmful-effects-tobacco/tobacco-and-environment?msclkid=21b8af20c00f11eca7d1568348a74acb>

2. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0072.pdf>

3. [https://data.calschls.org/resources/Del\\_Norte\\_County\\_1719\\_Sec\\_CHKS.pdf](https://data.calschls.org/resources/Del_Norte_County_1719_Sec_CHKS.pdf)

4. [https://data.calschls.org/resources/Humboldt\\_County\\_1719\\_Sec\\_CHKS.pdf](https://data.calschls.org/resources/Humboldt_County_1719_Sec_CHKS.pdf)

5. [https://data.calschls.org/resources/Lake\\_County\\_1719\\_Sec\\_CHKS.pdf](https://data.calschls.org/resources/Lake_County_1719_Sec_CHKS.pdf)

6. [https://data.calschls.org/resources/Mendocino\\_County\\_1719\\_Sec\\_CHKS.pdf](https://data.calschls.org/resources/Mendocino_County_1719_Sec_CHKS.pdf)

7. <https://cthat.org/>

bit.ly/borntobreath



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SOURCES