

April 18, 2016

CIGARETTE LITTER REMAINS A 1.69 MILLION POUND PROBLEM

Tobacco Free Florida Encourages Floridians to Play Their Part in Reducing Cigarette Litter



Contact

Communications Office
NewsMedia@flhealth.gov
850-245-4111

Tallahassee, Fla.—This Earth Day, the Florida Department of Health’s Tobacco Free Florida Program reminds Floridians that cigarette butts are the most littered item in the world, adding up to 1.69 million pounds of toxic litter each year.¹ On Friday, April 22, 2016, smokers can use this observance to consider what they can do to help the environment – including quitting tobacco use.

“Earth Day is an important reminder to evaluate how we personally impact the environment,” said Interim State Surgeon General Dr. Celeste Philip. “Encouraging tobacco users to quit smoking can improve the health of all Floridians, and reduce the amount of cigarette litter throughout our state. It’s a win-win.”

Although smokers are legally required to properly discard their used cigarettes, 76.7 percent – about three out of four – throw them on the ground or out of a car window instead.^{2,3} Cigarette butts are not biodegradable and stay in the environment for more than 10 years, allowing tobacco product waste to continue accumulating.⁴

Many discarded cigarettes also end up in storm drains where they get carried into streams, rivers and oceans.⁵ This impacts fish, birds, whales and other marine creatures that mistake the toxic filters for food.⁶ In addition to ending up in the water, they also end up on beaches across Florida. In 2014, 229,610 cigarette butts were picked up on beaches throughout the state in a single day.⁷

Floridians who want to quit smoking are encouraged to find the cessation services that work best for them at tobaccofreeflorida.com.

About Tobacco Free Florida

The department’s Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida’s tobacco settlement fund. Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state’s three ways to quit. Since 2007, more than 126,140 Floridians have successfully quit, using one of these free services. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida and the state’s free quit resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](http://PublicHealthAccreditationBoard.org), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.

¹ Novotny, Thomas E., Kristen Lum, Elizabeth Smith, Vivian Wang, and Richard20 Barnes. "Cigarettes Butts and the Case for an Environmental Policy on Hazardous Cigarette Waste." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Molecular Diversity Preservation International (MDPI), 20 May 2009. Web. 27 July 2015. <<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2697937/>>.

² The 2015 Florida Statutes Title XXIX Chapter 403 Florida Litter Law." *Online Sunshine Official Internet Site of the Florida Legislature*. Florida Legislature, 2015. Web. 07 Mar. 2016.

<http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=0400-0499%2F0403%2FSections%2F0403.413.html>.

³ Novotny, Thomas E., and Elli Slaughter. "Tobacco Product Waste: An Environmental Approach to Reduce Tobacco Consumption." *Springer Link*. Springer, 6 May 2014. Web. 7 Mar. 2016.

<<http://download.springer.com/static/pdf/980/art%253A10.1007%252Fs40572-014-0016-x.pdf?originUrl=http%3A%2F%2Flink.springer.com%2Farticle%2F10.1007%2Fs40572-014-0016-x&token2=exp=1457376207~acl=%2Fstatic%2Fpdf%2F980%2Fart%25253A10.1007%25252Fs40572-014-0016-x.pdf%3ForiginUrl%3Dhttp%253A%252F%252Flink.springer.com%252Farticle%252F10.1007%252Fs40572-014-0016-x%~hmac=f08b67b61589c30f83e796abc2a8b412472e3fa079d0355941bae712f61dd1d9>>.

⁴ Bonanomi G, Incerti G, Cesarano G, Gaglione SA, Lanzotti V (2015) Cigarette Butt Decomposition and Associated Chemical Changes Assessed by C CPMAS NMR. *PLoS ONE* 10(1): e0117393. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0117393.

⁵ Novotny, Thomas E., Kristen Lum, Elizabeth Smith, Vivian Wang, and Richard20 Barnes. "Cigarettes Butts and the Case for an Environmental Policy on Hazardous Cigarette Waste." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Molecular Diversity Preservation International (MDPI), 20 May 2009. Web. 27 July 2015. <<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2697937/>>.

⁶ Novotny, Thomas E., Kristen Lum, Elizabeth Smith, Vivian Wang, and Richard20 Barnes. "Cigarettes Butts and the Case for an Environmental Policy on Hazardous Cigarette Waste." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Molecular Diversity Preservation International (MDPI), 20 May 2009. Web. 27 July 2015. <<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2697937/>>.

⁷ "International Coastal Cleanup 2015 Report." *Ocean Conservancy* (2015): 20. *Ocean Conservancy*. Ocean Conservancy, 2015. Web. 7 Mar. 2016. <<http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/marine-debris/2015-data-release/2015-data-release-pdf.pdf>>.