

Surfrider Foundation partners with SLO County Tobacco Control to clean up Avila Beach cigarette butts



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Eco SLO, the Surfrider Foundation and the San Luis Obispo County Tobacco Control Program partnered to host a cigarette butt beach cleanup at Avila Beach on Saturday.

The ‘Hold On To Your Butt’ Awareness Day and cleanup focused on encouraging smokers to put out their cigarettes safely and dispose of them properly.

Volunteers handed out pocket ash trays for people to store their used cigarettes before being able to dispose of them in a trash can.

According to the County Tobacco Control Program, cigarette butts are the most littered item in the world, with about 4.5 trillion littered every year.

The Health Education Specialist with Tobacco Control Program, Ashley Allen, said the cigarettes are toxic and leach chemicals into waterways. She said the butts contribute to ocean micro plastics and their plastic filters never biodegrade.

Allen said the goal is to spread awareness.

“It’s become a cultural thing here where its okay to throw your cigarette butt on the ground,” Allen said. “So people who would never throw a candy wrapper on the ground, throw their cigarette butt on the ground. There needs to be a cultural change.”

Coastal Cleanup Day on the Central Coast last year picked up more than 15,000 cigarette butts in just a few hours.

California Senate Bill 424 introduce in February would prohibit single-use filters in cigarettes and single-use electronic cigarettes or vaporizer devices.

