



## Cigarette Litter Fact Sheet

### The problem of cigarette butts

1. They cost Washington taxpayers. [San Francisco spends \\$7.5 million USD](#) in cigarette cleanup costs and lost revenue- what the City of Seattle spends is unknown. Using the \$.15 per pack tax, [WA Dept of Ecology spends \\$4 million/year picking up litter along highways](#).
2. They cost Washington businesses. The [presence of litter not only decreases property values and attractiveness](#), the Seattle Chapter found that it can burden businesses whose employees have to sweep mounds of butts from doorways while on the clock.
3. They are the [most littered item in the world](#) and in Washington. An estimated 5 trillion are discarded each year, and they make up [32% of all litter in outdoor recreation areas](#). They are also the most littered item on Washington beaches, confirmed every year at the 2013 [International Coastal Cleanup](#).
4. They break down into micro plastics in the ocean- they're not a paper product, though they're designed to look like one. Filters are made of cellulose acetate- a plastic, synthetic fiber, and [there is no evidence they biodegrade](#).
5. They harm and kill our fish and birds. Cigarette butt filters are toxic waste and proven harmful. When wet, butts leach out toxins which are proven to be [lethal to fish](#). [Birds take the filters to line their nests, harming their young](#).

### The solution

Hold On To Your Butts—an education and action oriented initiative to promote responsible disposal and provide public receptacles for cigarette litter. In a recent survey, 97% of respondents indicated they *would* use a cigarette receptacle if provided one in public areas (Nicholas Schippers, 2015). We can install those receptacles around Seattle, with your help. Interested in taking action on solutions to cigarette litter? Find us on Facebook, on Twitter @SEASurfrider, and at [seattle.surfrider.org](http://seattle.surfrider.org).