

Kick the butt of pollution! SDSU's Center for Tobacco and the Environment launches new tobacco product waste tracking app

San Diego, California - May 7, 2025 — The Center for Tobacco and the Environment at San Diego State University is excited to introduce iKickButts, a new smartphone app designed to track, map, and educate about commercial tobacco product waste in communities.

iKickButts allows users to learn about the toxic legacy of commercial tobacco products in outdoor environments. Users will be able to **photograph, map, classify, and count tobacco product waste in their community**. Users can download summarized reports and data on tobacco product waste submitted by themselves and other app users. They can share this information with their community and local elected officials to raise awareness about reducing toxic tobacco pollution. Additionally, iKickButts allows individuals and groups to organize cleanup events within their community and create community science projects within the app.

iKickButts will be available to download in the United States in the Apple App Store® and Google Play Store® on May 7th, with plans to expand globally in the next year. The app is free to download and use, and in-app purchases will be available for additional features in future releases.

“Throughout the development of iKickButts, we've seen incredible enthusiasm from educators who want to use it as a tool in their classrooms and youth programs,” said Dr. Sarah Lavalley, the coordinator of the Center for Tobacco and the Environment. “It’s exciting to see how it can help engage young people in advocacy and environmental protection.”

A recent study by the Center for Tobacco and the Environment (CTE) estimates that [200 million cigarette butts](#) are discarded into the environment annually in San Diego County. **Scaling that number globally, 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are discarded in the environment worldwide every year.** Lined end-to-end, 4.5 trillion cigarette butts would circle the Earth 2,850 times, or almost 8 times a day for an entire year.

“Cigarette filters are a staggering local and global problem,” said Dr. Georg Matt, the director of the Center for Tobacco and the Environment. “They are single-use plastic items full of hazardous chemicals that are discarded by the billions on sidewalks, parking lots, parks, and beaches.” Cigarette butts, which are [the most littered item in the world](#), are made of cellulose acetate, a

type of plastic. When discarded in the environment, cigarette butts break down into microplastics and leach toxic chemicals into waterways. Other types of tobacco product waste, such as vape cartridges, also release plastics, metals, and other chemicals into the environment.

By creating a way for people to become community scientists and monitor commercial tobacco product waste around the globe, the Center hopes to inspire people to learn more about the harms of tobacco product waste in their communities. Armed with this knowledge and data, people can take action and advocate for policy changes that help create a world free of toxic commercial tobacco product waste.

Learn more about the iKickButts app [here](#).

Learn more about the Center for Tobacco and the Environment [here](#).



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