



March 29, 2025

The Honorable Damon Connolly, Chair
Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials
1020 N Street, Room 171
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for AB 762 – Ban on Single-Use Disposable Vapes – Co-Sponsor Support

Dear Chair Connolly,

On behalf of Californians Against Waste, California Product Stewardship Council, California Public Interest Research Group, and Rethink Waste, we are proud to co-sponsor AB 762, which seeks to ban the sale of single-use disposable vaporizer products in California. This critical legislation addresses the alarming environmental, safety, and public health risks posed by these hazardous products, protecting our communities, waste infrastructure, and natural ecosystems from their destructive impact.

Single-use vapes contain embedded lithium-ion batteries, making them not only an unsustainable source of electronic waste but also a significant fire hazard. When improperly discarded—as is often the case—these devices ignite fires in garbage cans, collection trucks, and material recovery facilities (MRFs). These lithium-ion battery fires can reach temperatures of up to 1200°C—equivalent to a welding torch—causing rapid and uncontrollable blazes. The U.K. has already linked disposable vape waste to a staggering 77% increase in waste facility fires over the last year alone. California waste and recycling operators are facing a similar crisis, with escalating fire risks and increased costs in managing this hazardous waste.

Beyond safety concerns, single-use vapes contribute to an egregious waste of valuable resources. The lithium discarded in these devices annually could otherwise power over 2,600 electric vehicles, underscoring the reckless depletion of critical materials. Additionally, the mining and manufacturing of lithium and cobalt—key components of vape batteries—exacerbate environmental degradation and perpetuate environmental justice issues in vulnerable communities.

Disposable vapes are rapidly becoming a dominant form of electronic litter, contaminating highways, parks, and beaches. The Marine Conservation Society reports that these products are now routinely found along coastlines, where they pose an immediate threat to marine life. Unlike cigarette butts, which take up to ten years to degrade, single-use vapes introduce long-lasting toxic pollutants into ecosystems, including residual nicotine, lead, and mercury, which can leach into soil and waterways.

The vast majority of consumers—72%—are unaware that these devices cannot be disposed of in standard recycling or garbage streams. The absence of a standardized, effective collection and recycling process means that single-use vapes are, in reality, unmanageably toxic waste. The current status quo places the

burden on local governments and waste management operators, forcing them to treat these hazardous materials at exorbitant costs.

Disposable vapes have driven a troubling surge in youth nicotine addiction. According to recent CDC data, 14.1% of high school students and 3.3% of middle school students report using e-cigarettes, with a staggering 57.2% of high school users and 45.8% of middle school users favoring disposable vape products. Over 84.8% of teen users report using flavored vapes, including fruit, candy, and menthol varieties, further entrenching nicotine dependence.

Emerging research reveals that disposable vapes expose users to heightened levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and toxic metals such as nickel, cadmium, mercury, and chromium—compounds linked to increased risks of cancer, cardiopulmonary disease, and neurological disorders. This growing body of evidence underscores the urgent need for intervention to protect public health, particularly among vulnerable youth populations.

California has long been a leader in environmental protection and consumer safety, and this bill aligns with global momentum to eliminate single-use disposable vapes. Countries including the U.K., France, Belgium, New Zealand, and Vietnam have already taken decisive action against these products, recognizing the irreversible harm they cause. California must act now to prevent further environmental degradation, public health crises, and economic burdens associated with their unregulated disposal.

For public and environmental health, we urge your aye vote when AB 762 is presented in the Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials committee. Thank you for your attention to this pressing concern.

Sincerely,

Californians Against Waste
California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC)
California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG)
RethinkWaste