



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 (Irwin and Wilson) – Ban on Disposable Vapes – COALITION SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Connolly,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write in strong support of AB 762 (Irwin and Wilson), 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, unmanageable 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 the sake of our environment, public health, and waste infrastructure, we urge you to support AB 762 and move it forward in the legislative process. We appreciate your leadership in tackling this urgent issue and stand ready to support efforts to pass this critical bill.

Sincerely,

### **The Undersigned Organizations**

Californians Against Waste (Cosponsor)  
California Product Stewardship Council (Cosponsor)  
California Public Interest Research Group (Cosponsor)  
RethinkWaste (Cosponsor)  
ACR Solar  
Action on Smoking and Health  
Active San Gabriel Valley  
Albatross Coalition  
Algalita Marine Research and Education  
Azul  
Ban Single-Use Plastic  
Breathe California (Bay Area, Golden Gate, and Central Coast)  
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners  
California Nurses for Environmental Health and Justice  
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Stockton Environmental Justice Program  
Chico Bag  
City of Thousand Oaks

Clean Earth 4 Kids  
Community Environmental Council  
Courage California  
Clean Water Action  
Defend Our Health  
Ecology Center  
Endangered Habitats League  
Families Advocating for Chemical and Toxics Safety (FACTS)  
Friends Committee on Legislation of California  
Heal The Bay  
Ivan's Recycling  
Los Angeles Waterkeeper  
Marin Sanitary Service  
Napa Recycling and Waste Services  
National Stewardship Action Council (NSAC)  
Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)  
Northern California Recycling Association  
Oakland Recycles  
Oceanic Preservation Society  
Plastic Free Future  
Plastic Pollution Coalition  
Product Stewardship Institute  
ReGen Monterey  
Republic Services  
ReThink Disposable  
Rural County Representatives of California  
Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority  
San Diego Pediatricians for Clean Air  
Santa Barbara County Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division  
Save Our Shores  
Save the Bay  
Sierra Club California  
Simply Recycle  
SoCal 350 Climate Action  
Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) Legislative Task Force  
The Last Plastic Straw  
The Surfrider Foundation  
The 5 Gyres Institute  
Torus Consulting  
TRI-CED Community Recycling  
tUrn Climate Crisis Awareness and Action  
Upstream  
Waste Management  
West Marin Environmental Action Coalition  
Wilmington Recyclers  
Zero Waste Marin Joint Powers Authority  
Zero Waste San Diego  
Zero Waste Sonoma Joint Powers Authority  
7<sup>th</sup> Generation Advisors