

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF COMMERCIAL TOBACCO



**How does commercial tobacco harm the environment? [1]  
Let's count the ways:**



## 1. Deforestation

Approximately 600 million trees are chopped down each year by the tobacco industry. [2]

## 2. Greenhouse Gases

Tobacco burning during the growing and manufacturing process increases greenhouse gas levels by generating water and air pollutants. [3]



## 3. Toxic Chemicals

815,985 pounds of toxic chemicals were released into the environment from US tobacco facilities in 2019. [4]

## 4. Litter

4.2 million cigarette butts were collected on beaches and waterways globally in 2019. [5]



## 5. Electronic Waste

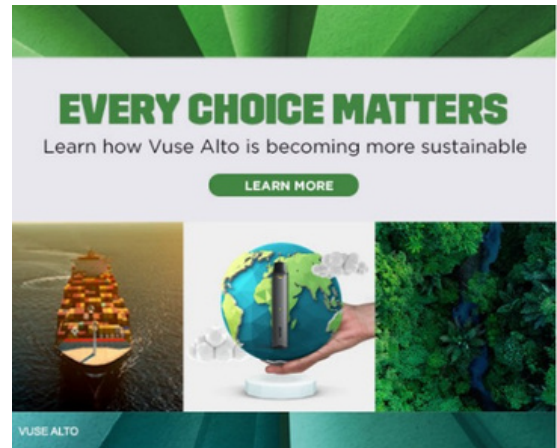
Americans generated 2.7 million tons of e-waste, including electronic cigarette (vape) waste, in 2018. [6]



# What has the tobacco industry done to reduce its environmental impact? Not much.

Instead of taking responsibility for its environmental impact and changing its own behavior, the tobacco industry shifts blame onto the consumer. They promote "green" initiatives without real change or admission of their contribution to climate change (also known as "greenwashing").

Side: Vuse Alto promoted "green" initiatives being taken for Earth Day such as reducing plastic packaging and reducing shipping CO2 emissions.



"Our best course of action may be maintaining a low profile while working to exempt cigarettes from coverage of pending litter control legislation."

1998 Master Settlement Agreement tobacco industry documents detailing environmental impacts of cigarettes. [7]

It is well established and accepted that the industry's cover up of the health impacts of tobacco were evil, and the environmental cover up is no different. The industry knew tobacco products were harmful to the environment and actively worked to cover it up.

## Policy solutions include:

- Sales restrictions;
- Comprehensive smoking restrictions;
- Hazardous waste or materials laws; and
- Educational campaigns.

The policy solutions listed above aim to address some of the sources of the problem - such as the normalization of tobacco use, the availability of products, and patterns of product use. [7]

[1] Tobacco Atlas. Environment. <https://tobaccoatlas.org/topic/environment/>. Published 2020. Accessed July 21, 2022.  
[2] Framework Convention Alliance. Tobacco: A barrier to sustainable development. March 2015. [http://fctc.wpiengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Tobacco\\_sustainable\\_development\\_190315.pdf](http://fctc.wpiengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Tobacco_sustainable_development_190315.pdf)  
[3] Tobacco Atlas. Environment. <https://tobaccoatlas.org/topic/environment/>. Published 2020. Accessed July 25, 2022.  
[4] Environmental Protection Agency. Chemical Report; TRI Explorer; 2019 Dataset. EPA2019.  
[5] Together, We are Team Ocean. Ocean Conservancy; 2020.  
[6] Environmental Protection Agency. Basic Information about Electronics Stewardship. <https://www.epa.gov/smm-electronics/basic-informationabout-electronics-stewardship>. Published 2020. Accessed July 25, 2022.  
[7] Bialous S. The tobacco industry's response to environmental harms of tobacco. Oral presentation at: National Conference on Tobacco or Health Annual Meeting; June, 2022; New Orleans, LA.