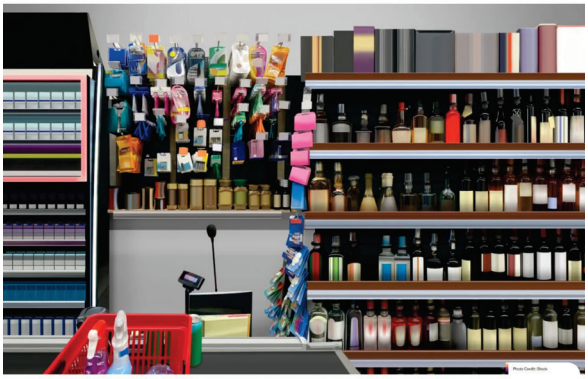
BUSINESS

Lawmakers propose first-of-its-kind ban for dangerous product that targets children: 'Highlight the costliness of this problem'

"Continuing to push this conversation … that's going to be huge."

By Susan Elizabeth Tunis / March 12, 2025



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California is taking another swing at an industry notorious for producing toxic waste, and its first-of-a-kind ban could strengthen protections for some of society's most vulnerable members.

As reported by the Associated Press, lawmakers introduced a bill Feb. 19 that would outlaw the sale of disposable vapes beginning January 1, 2026. Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin authored the legislation.

Whereas previous regulations — such as the ban of flavored tobacco products — focused more on limiting vape use among children, this proposal aims to reduce plastic pollution.

The U.S. PIRG Education Fund estimates that Americans discard 4.5 single-use vapes each second. If laid out, the vapes would stretch over 7,000 miles — enough to go from coast to coast at least 2.5 times.

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, even though e-cigarette products generally have fewer deadly chemicals than traditional cigarettes, they can still contain cancer-linked toxins, heavy metals like lead, and other hazardous substances like battery acid.

When discarded, vapes leach these toxins into the environment, potentially contaminating our drinking water. It's also not uncommon for people to inadvertently dispose of single-use vapes. The dangerous debris has sunk/sent the fires of more than one ship.

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Despite these troublesome impacts, not everyone was pleased with the proposal. Neighborhood Market Association co-founder Arkan Romo worried the disposable vape ban would harm family businesses selling tobacco products. Others pointed out disposable vapes are cheaper and more accessible than refillable options, per the AP.

However, upgrading to high-quality reusable products can save money in the long run, so the ban may pay dividends over time for concerned parties. Meanwhile, Californians Against Waste policy associate Tony Hackett highlighted a crucial reason why a plan to outlaw disposable vapes could be popular among Golden State residents.

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"While these products pollute our planet, they're also targeting our most vulnerable among us — our children," Hackett said to the AP. "Disposable vapes are designed for maximum addiction and minimum accountability."

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"Continuing to push this conversation and highlight the costliness of this problem and how little — if any — benefits at all these items bring, that's going to be huge," added Carolina Saavedra, staff attorney with the Public Health Law Center at Minnesota's Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

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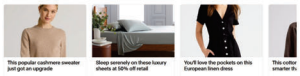

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"As a person who uses a vape, I agree with this decision. Disposables are a horrendous waste of e-resources," one Redditor shared in the r/California_Politics community.

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