



PRESS RELEASE **County of Los Angeles** **Department of Public Works**

County of Los Angeles Residents Can Prevent Cigarette Butts from Causing Water Pollution

LOS ANGELES (November 18, 2009) — The County of Los Angeles salutes the Great American Smokeout. County residents can improve their health and the environment by going "smoke free" on November 19 in recognition of this annual event which inspires and encourages smokers to quit for one day.

Cigarette butts are the single, most-commonly littered item in the world. Many smokers don't realize how toxic cigarette butts can be to urban river systems, like the Los Angeles and San Gabriel rivers, and the ocean. Discarded cigarette butts picked up by the wind, leaf blowers, or urban runoff from over-watered lawns are carried into the County's storm drain system. This system is designed to carry rainwater from the street to the ocean in order to prevent flooding. Pollutants in the storm drain system are transported into local bodies of water that flow to the ocean where they may harm marine life.

"The only way we can resolve the pollution problem is to encourage people to change their habits," said Gail Farber, County Public Works Director. "You can start by always using ashtrays to dispose of cigarette butts."

"Better yet, I encourage all smokers to participate in the Great American Smokeout and do their best to quit the habit, thus helping to solve the pollution problem and improve their health," Farber added.

Los Angeles County offers resources to residents who are currently addicted to tobacco, have already quit, or want to help a friend or relative kick this deadly addiction as well. Residents can visit LAQuits.com for information and resources about quitting smoking, or call the California Smokers' Helpline, 1-800-NO-BUTTS.

For information about the County's pollution prevention programs, call 1(888)CLEAN LA or log on to www.CleanLA.com.

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