

# POLICY PLATFORM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Reducing the Impact of Commercial Tobacco on California Tribes & Tribal Nations



Traditional tobacco has been used in Tribal communities for thousands of years. There is no single Tribal practice of tobacco use, but there are some commonalities,<sup>1</sup> such as its use as a medicine to promote physical, spiritual, emotional, and community well-being.<sup>2</sup> Commercial tobacco is different from traditional tobacco in that it is manufactured for recreational purposes and includes toxic additives such as tar, arsenic, and formaldehyde.<sup>1</sup>

Historically, the tobacco industry has strategically targeted American Indian and Alaska Natives (AIAN) communities by promoting commercial tobacco through sponsoring cultural events and by using American Indian imagery in cigarette brands.<sup>3</sup> Nationally and in California, AIAN communities have disproportionately higher rates

of commercial tobacco use, fewer smokefree households, and higher exposure to secondhand smoke.<sup>4,5</sup> As a result, AIAN communities have experienced a disproportionate number of tobacco-related health problems, including asthma, heart disease, lung cancer, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.<sup>6</sup>

The Tribal Community Coordinating Center (TCCC), a statewide coordinating center funded by the California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program, has prepared a culturally appropriate policy platform laying out four priorities for reducing commercial tobacco use and exposure while respecting the value of traditional tobacco in Tribal communities.

### Traditional Tobacco

VS

### Commercial Tobacco



- **Encompasses using a blend of plant**  
In some cases does not include the tobacco plant.
- **Part of a cultural process**  
Such as growing, tending, harvesting, using in prayer and ceremonial procedures.
- **Used for medicinal purposes**  
Such as healing or pain relief.



- **Toxic additives**  
Such as tar, arsenic, and formaldehyde.
- **Only used for sales**  
Used solely as a | product for revenue.
- **Targeted at Tribal Communities**  
Including tribal youth.



### PRIORITY 1

## Increase the Number of Smokefree Homes and Workplaces

#### Why smokefree policies are good for Tribal communities:

- They reduce exposure to secondhand smoke.
- They reduce tobacco-related health problems.
- They increase successful quit attempts.

#### How California Tribal partners plan to honor Tribal communities:

- Build on the values of respect, family, and intergenerational ties.
- Encourage voluntary smoking restrictions.
- Urge smokefree policies for Tribal-owned housing, health clinics, and workplaces.
- Recruit smokefree champions for leadership positions.



## PRIORITY 2 Reduce Tobacco Product Waste (TPW)

### Why Tribal communities need TPW policies:

- TPW is toxic to humans, animals, and the environment.
- Reducing TPW creates a safer environment for children.
- Discarded cigarette butts can cause destructive wildfires.

### How California Tribal partners plan to honor Tribal communities:

- Collaborate with Tribal entities including security and groundskeeping, youth coalitions, and prevention advisory boards.
- Implement community education on litter awareness.
- Develop model policies in collaboration with leaders.



## PRIORITY 3 Increase Tobacco Cessation Services

### Why Tribal communities need effective cessation services:

- Programs can increase quit rates among Tribal populations.
- Group-based services show promise by drawing on the values of family and community.
- Culturally sensitive programs celebrate traditional tobacco and provide linkages to Tribal-specific support services.

### How California Tribal partners plan to honor Tribal communities:

- Provide community education on services including referral information for medical, dental, behavioral, and social services staff.
- Develop model cessation protocol in collaboration with Tribal health clinics and social services.
- Expand use of posters, social media campaigns, and digital storytelling.



## PRIORITY 4 Adopt and Implement Excise Taxes on Tobacco

### Why excise taxes on tobacco are good for Tribal communities:

- Increase the price of tobacco products to reduce tobacco use rates.
- Close loopholes used by tobacco companies on Tribal lands.
- Reduce the initiation of smoking by youth.

### How California Tribal partners plan to honor Tribal communities:

- Collaborate with Tribal businesses, councils, security, and coalitions.
- Provide community education with Tribal council members, Tribal programs, and retailers.
- Adopt excise tax policy supported by sample endorsement and letters of support.

### Sources

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3. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2014.
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5. Maternal and Infant Health Assessment (MIHA) Survey. California Department of Public Health, Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Program; 2012.
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