

Tobacco industry tactics influential in e-cigarette policy

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By U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
(<http://women.smokefree.gov/ecigs.aspx>) [Public domain]. Credit: Wikimedia Commons

By employing the same tactics it used to drive policymaking from the 1970s-1990s, the tobacco industry has become successful in influencing pro-industry e-cigarette laws at the state level, according to a UCSF study published in the September issue of *Milbank Quarterly*.

E-cigarettes entered the US market in 2007 as an unregulated product and remained so until 2009 when local and state policymakers began identifying ways to regulate their sale and use. By 2013, cigarette companies had entered the e-cigarette market and began lobbying state legislatures in Minnesota, New York, Illinois, and California against

efforts to restrict sales and use, said the study's first author Elizabeth Cox.

"By 2013, [tobacco companies](#) led by Philip Morris USA were spending more than \$6 million on lobbying in some of those [states](#), about ten times the amount spent by e-cigarette companies," the study's first author Elizabeth Cox said. "By making contributions, lobbying, and establishing third-party front groups, it wasn't long before they were able to call the shots on e-cigarette policy at the state level."

The paper also found that the [tobacco industry](#) was not the only interest group involved in directing policy outcomes.

"E-cigarette user groups and retailers used many of the same tobacco-style tactics in grassroots efforts to defeat public health legislation," said second author Rachel Barry, MA. "As with the earlier tobacco control debates, public health advocates had the most success at local levels in overcoming intense opposition from the tobacco industry and the grassroots e-cigarette movement."

Policymakers at the local level were much more responsive to constituents' concerns over the safety and availability of e-cigarettes and have lead the way in establishing [public health](#) legislation restricting access and use e-cigarettes, said principal investigator Stanton Glantz, professor of Medicine and director of UCSF's Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education.

More information: ELIZABETH COX et al. E-cigarette Policymaking by Local and State Governments: 2009-2014, *The Milbank Quarterly* (2016). [DOI: 10.1111/1468-0009.12212](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0009.12212)

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