



GROVER BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE

Grover Beach Police Department Secures \$137,661 from the California Department of Justice to Combat Illegal Tobacco Use Among Minors in the City

January 9, 2020

At Monday night's City Council meeting, the City Council approved the acceptance of \$137,661 in state funding to tackle the illegal sale of tobacco products to minors as part of the California Department of Justice's Tobacco Grant Program. The grants were awarded to 76 local entities throughout the state to support the enforcement of state and local laws related to the illegal sales and marketing of tobacco products to minors. California Attorney General Xavier Becerra announced the recipients on October 1, 2019. (DOJ Press Release: <https://tinyurl.com/vc4osbx>)

"Tobacco is a serious threat to public health, especially to California's youth," said Attorney General Becerra. "These grants will support local communities in enforcing the law and educating kids about the harms of tobacco products. My office is dedicated to ensuring the state has the resources necessary to curb the dangers of tobacco and protect the public's well-being. Preventing or reducing illegal sales of tobacco to minors will pave the way to a healthier California—we're committed to tackling this public health crisis head on."

The Grover Beach Police Department will use the grant funds over the next three years to conduct several educational lessons in our local schools through the Police Department's Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program; conduct Tobacco use enforcement operations in and around City parks; to educate and conduct enforcement operations with our local Tobacco licensed establishments. These educational opportunities and enforcement operations will help ensure minors are not using or possessing tobacco products and our retail establishments are in compliance with state and local laws.

"The serious health hazards affecting our children created by tobacco use and vaping need to be stopped," - Chief John Peters. "With the funding assistance from the state, our officers will be able to help educate minors on the importance of making positive choices and avoiding the dangers of tobacco use. We will also educate tobacco retailers on how to prevent sales to minors. In collaboration with the San Luis Obispo County Department of Public Health and Tobacco Control Program, the Police Department will provide educational materials to the public on the dangers of tobacco use and vaping among our children."

The Department of Justice's Tobacco Grant Program is funded by Proposition 56 (Prop. 56), the California Healthcare, Research and Prevention Tobacco Tax Act of 2016. Beginning April 2017, Prop. 56 raised the cigarette tax by \$2.00 per pack, with an equivalent increase on all other tobacco products. Prop. 56 also allocates millions of dollars annually to the California Department of Justice for distribution to local law enforcement agencies for the support and hiring of peace officers for various activities. These activities include investigations and compliance checks to reduce the illegal sale of tobacco products to minors.

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