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PRESS RELEASE

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Miami Beach to Launch Voluntary Smoke-Free Zone Program — “Thank You for Not Smoking” Signs to be Placed at Lummus Park & 86 Street —

Miami Beach, FL – The City of Miami Beach has established two voluntary smoke-free zones on the beach at the southern end of Lummus Park at Fifth Street and on 86 Street. Residents and visitors are encouraged to refrain from smoking in these areas.

“This pilot program was brought about to initiate efforts to reduce second-hand smoke, which can pose a health risk to everyone, and also as an anti-litter measure as discarded components of cigarettes are toxic to wildlife, waterways and beaches,” said Miami Beach Director of Environment & Sustainability Elizabeth Wheaton.

Signs will be installed at both locations to delineate the smoke-free area and will be in conformance with the phrasing and visual messaging of Miami Beach’s anti-litter campaign.

Cigarette butts are one of the largest pollutants found on the sand, with an estimated 1.7 billion pounds accumulating in the natural environment annually. Despite the common misconception, cigarette filters can take between five to 10 years to completely biodegrade as they are made of cellulose acetate, a fibrous plastic. Discarded cigarette butts can be carried as runoff from streets to drains, canals and eventually to the ocean. Those that are disposed on the beach, degrade the quality of beaches and are often washed away directly into the ocean by incoming waves. These filters then become hazardous to birds and other marine organisms that often confuse it as being edible.

“Cigarette filters are the single most collected item during beach cleanups each year,” added Wheaton. “They are an environmental blight on streets, sidewalks and other open areas.”

Many other municipalities, including New York City and Los Angeles, have banned smoking in public areas and parks for this reason. The State of Florida preempts local governments from regulating smoking on public property.



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