

# For decades, tobacco companies paid Hollywood to push smoking in movies.

## Why are state taxpayers doing it now?



**IN MARCH 2012**, the US Surgeon General reported that US tobacco companies long paid Hollywood to push smoking in movies.

Today, so do taxpayers.

Through film production incentives, states hand out hundreds of millions of dollars to producers of movies with smoking.

Research shows that exposure to on-screen smoking accounts for a million current teen smokers in the US. More than 300,000 of these recruits will ultimately die from tobacco-induced disease.

It's a problem so urgent that, in May 2012, a bipartisan group of thirty-eight state Attorneys General wrote the movie studios to demand that they stop what the AGs called a "colossal, preventable tragedy."

The states' policy challenge? Indiscriminate film subsidies undermine efforts to keep kids from starting to smoke and to avert billions in health costs. No state can afford this deadly, wasteful policy conflict.

Fortunately, the fix is straightforward.

In 2011, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended that states can simply make future media productions with tobacco ineligible for public subsidies.

There's no First Amendment issue. After all, states already refuse to subsidize a range of other media productions, from political advertising to pornography.

**IN JULY 2012**, setting the example, Washington State's Attorney General petitioned for a rule change to block movies with smoking from getting state tax credits.

Whether or not you believe film production subsidies make sense as economic development policy, collateral damage to public health makes them unsustainable and unsupportable.

It's time to mend state film subsidies. Or end them. Learn more at [bit.ly/fixsubsidy](http://bit.ly/fixsubsidy).



[SmokeFreeMovies.ucsf.edu](http://SmokeFreeMovies.ucsf.edu)