The tobacco industry uses economic arguments to persuade governments, the media and the general population that smoking benefits the economy. It claims that if tobacco control measures are introduced, tax revenues will fall, jobs will be lost and there will be great hardship to the economy.

But the industry greatly exaggerates the economic losses, if any, which tobacco control measures will cause and they never mention the economic costs which tobacco inflicts upon every country.

Tobacco’s cost to governments, to employers and to the environment includes social, welfare and health care spending, loss of foreign exchange in importing cigarettes, loss of land that could grow food, costs of fires and damage to buildings caused by careless smoking; environmental costs ranging from deforestation to collection of smokers’ litter, absenteeism, decreased productivity, higher numbers of accidents and higher insurance premiums.

Trash collected in the USA
43 states 1996

cigarette butts 20%
other 80%

Health-care costs
Health care costs attributable to tobacco
2002 or latest available estimates
selected countries

USA $76 billion
Canada $1.6 billion
UK $2.25 billion
Germany $14.7 billion
China $3.5 billion
Philippines $600 million
New Zealand $84 million
Australia $6 billion
China 1987: World’s worst forest fire caused by cigarettes
300 killed
5,000 made homeless
1.3 million hectares of land destroyed

Annual cost of loss from time off work
Telecom Australia employees
Australian $16.5 million

Cost of fires caused by smoking
annual global estimates
2000
percentage of all fire deaths: 10%
total killed by fires caused by smoking: 300,000
total cost of fires caused by smoking: US$27 billion

Every year
1,000,000 fires are started by children using cigarette lighters

Workplace smoking costs
the USA

$47 billion every year

Cost to the Economy
Smoking accounted for over 6% of total health care expenses in the USA in 1999

Average days off sick per year in the USA
2001

6.16 smokers
4.53 ex-smokers
3.86 never-smokers

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