

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful- Comments for Joint Tourism and Recreation Development Committee and Transportation Committee Informational Meeting

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is grateful for the opportunity to provide information to the House's Tourism and Recreation Development and Transportation Committees. Thank you to Chairman Millard, Chairman Longietti, Chairman Hennessey and Chairman Carroll for hosting this session and bringing attention to the very visible litter and illegal dumping problems in Pennsylvania.

My name is Shannon Reiter and I am President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. I was born and raised in Westmoreland County and I currently reside there with my family. I have been with the organization for fifteen years and I am grateful to be with you today.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB) believes that **everyone wants to live, work and play in a clean and beautiful neighborhood.**

We provide direct and in-direct support to over 30 local affiliates, countless community stewards, educators, enforcement agencies, state, county and municipal officials, as well as other like-minded organizations through our three program focus areas: Prevent It, Clean It, and Keep It.

We are the **state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful** and I personally **serve on the Keep America Beautiful Board of Directors**. Through these connections, we work closely with other national organizations like the Ocean Conservancy and multi-national corporations such as PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, American Chemistry Council, Target, Anheuser-Busch, McDonalds and more, to collaborate on ways to end littering, increase recycling and beautify communities.

KPB is recognized nationally for our expertise in illegal dump prevention and abatement. In partnership with Nestor Resources in 2014 we developed and provided a comprehensive strategic plan that we believe would significantly reduce illegal dumping in Pennsylvania.

Similar to our work on litter that I am going to preview this morning, we did a comprehensive study on illegal dumping. A few key findings worth noting:

- We identified over 6,000 illegal dump sites in Pennsylvania.
- We found that there is less dumping where residents have access to trash disposal and recycling services.
- We determined that it costs \$614/ton to clean an illegal dump and the average community cleanup costs around \$3,000.

Our recommendation was and still is to ensure **universal access to convenient and affordable trash disposal and recycling**. Two key components of that plan which would also help deter littering is to:

- establish **rural convenience centers** for trash and recycling, and
- require **municipal contracts for waste and recycling services** in our cities.

We will continue to explore these strategies as we further examine the litter issue in Pennsylvania and evaluate appropriate strategies to address it.

Addressing litter is a win-win for all of us. Clean and beautiful communities are a nonpartisan issue. Addressing litter and changing littering behavior is in the best interest of tax payers, government agencies and businesses alike.

Pepsi and Coke do not want to see their product on the side of the road any more than PennDOT wants to pick it up with tax payer dollars. I am fortunate to work with such a broad coalition of stakeholders and invite you to join us in our efforts moving forward.

It is obvious, especially this time of year, that Pennsylvania has a very visible litter and illegal dumping problem. Some may suggest from the looks of our highways, rural roads, and vacant lots, that litter and illegal dumping is socially acceptable in Pennsylvania and that pains me a great deal.

Last year alone, **volunteers picked up 7.2 million pounds of trash from Pennsylvania roadways, trails, and streams.** That is 7.2 million pounds of litter and debris that will not make its way into the Chesapeake Bay or Delaware Estuary, but I assure you plenty of the litter you see today will make its way downstream.

While a lot of people are talking about marine debris, it's important to remember that **80% of all the plastics that are in our oceans are from land.** Trash travels, and it travels downstream. A large portion of the plastics in our oceans comes from southeast Asia and other developing economies, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't do our part to address litter and debris right here at home.

We should address this issue, not just because we care about sea turtles and migratory birds, but because we care about our neighborhoods, our communities and our own natural resources; **because clean and beautiful neighborhoods are building blocks for community and economic development.**

While I have presented multiple times at various waste and recycling hearings over the years, this is the first time that I have been asked to speak directly about litter and our efforts to address littering in Pennsylvania. **I'll start with our most prominent program, the Great American Cleanup of PA.**

KPB, in partnership with DEP and PennDOT, hosts the program March 1-May 31 of each year. During this time, registered groups can obtain free cleanup supplies donated from our agency partners, Keep America Beautiful and GLAD. During Pick It UP PA Days this year, from **April 13th to May 6th**, sponsored by PA DEP and the PA Waste Industry Association, registered groups can obtain free or reduced disposal at participating facilities.

In 2018, through the Great American Cleanup of PA there were

- 5,362 Events
- 108,638 Invaluable Volunteers
- 1,107,164 Pounds of Materials Recycled
- 6,632,920 Pounds of Trash Properly Disposed
- 8,915 Miles of Roads, Shorelines and Trails Cleaned
- The Return in Community Benefit for Each \$1 Invested by State Government was \$55

It is important to note that this effort is not just sponsored by our state agency partners and the waste and recycling industry. **Other businesses in Pennsylvania want to be a part of the solution and frankly, we need them to be.**

Pennsylvania retailers and trade associations have long supported this effort including the Food Merchants Associations and their membership including Weis Markets, Giant Martins, Wegman's, Sheetz and Wawa. Other sponsors include Republic, Mahantango Enterprises and Columbia Gas. This is an all hands-on deck opportunity for public-private partnerships to drive community improvement locally.

In addition to the Great American Cleanup of PA, KPB also coordinates the International Coastal Cleanup of PA, sponsors an Adoption and Litter Free School Zone Program, offers school and community-based education materials, hosts special collections for hard to dispose of items such as electronics, tires and bulky waste.

We also loan surveillance cameras to municipalities and local enforcement partners that are working to address illegal dumping through our **Illegal Dump Free PA Program**.

KPB conducts the Cigarette Litter Prevention Program throughout the state park system and offers Fresh Paint Day Grants, Bin Grants, Strategic Greening Grants, and Community Improvement Grants whenever resources allow.

Cleanups are critical to clean and beautiful communities, but we will never see the large scale, systematic change we want to see if we rely on cleanups to solve this problem.

It's important to remember that litter and illegal dumping are behaviors and **behaviors can be changed.**

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and its state agency partners are actively working to change these behaviors by following the **Keep America Beautiful Behavior Change System**.

The KAB Behavior Change System is an **integrated approach that serves as the primary tool for the development and implementation of behavior change programs** by affiliates.

The process includes: a Five-Step Management Process and Four Behavior Change Strategies.

The System engages people at every step and results in sustainable change for the greater good.

Utilizing the Five Step Management Process to change littering behavior in Pennsylvania, we start with Getting the Facts. We will then Prioritize the Behaviors we want to change. These could include something as simple as

- encouraging people to cover or tarp their load, or
- increase recycling of plastic film at their grocery store or even,
- reduce use of single-use plastics in general.

We then develop and implement an Action Plan to change those behaviors. The **Action Plan will deploy behavior change strategies** that will address the following:

- 1) Written Expectations
- 2) Infrastructure
- 3) Persuasion
- 4) Rewards and Penalties

We then evaluate our impacts and provide feedback.

Working through these strategies, with a broad coalition of stakeholders, each bringing their own expertise to the table, and pulling our collective resources, will result in real environmental, economic, and social impacts for Pennsylvania.

As the first step in the Behavior Change Management Process: Get the Facts, in partnership with DEP, PENNDOT, and the Richard King Mellon Foundation, we are conducting a litter research effort that includes:

- Visible Litter Survey of Pennsylvania Roadways,
- Litter Attitude Assessment, and a
- Municipal Litter Cost Study.

The research will be the foundation for our behavior change management approach to change littering behavior in Pennsylvania. We will determine the following:

- Material composition, quantity, and predicted source of litter along Pennsylvania roadways. **In other words, how much of the litter is single use plastic versus**

**cigarette butts? What types of plastics are we finding? How much is recyclable?
Are there predominate items that warrant targeted attention?**

- Pennsylvania attitudes towards littering behavior, enforcement, laws, penalties, public messaging and general awareness of environmental, economic and social impacts of littering. **This component of the study will help us develop our messaging as we will have a better understanding of our audience.**
- Municipal costs related to litter prevention, illegal dump prevention, education and outreach, litter abatement, illegal dumping abatement and enforcement.

Cities participating in the Municipal Litter Cost Study include Philadelphia, Reading, Altoona, Lancaster and Erie. We are still in discussions with Pittsburgh, Allentown and Harrisburg and are hopeful that they too will participate in this effort.

One of the primary things we learned from from a similar study of ten cities in Texas in 2017 was that of the millions of dollars spent on litter and illegal dumping, **80% was for cleanup and only 20% was for prevention.**

Unfortunately, it is **too early to share the results of our research.** While the field work has been completed for the visible litter study, the data is still being reviewed.

The attitude assessment is about 30% complete and while we have initiated the cost study, there is still a considerable amount of work to be done in obtaining the full cost analysis in each of the cities that are participating.

What I can tell you is that we are building **a broad coalition of stakeholders to develop a plan to change littering behavior in Pennsylvania.**

We have engaged our state agency and municipal partners.

We are building the support from the private sector including not just the waste and recycling industry but also retailers, manufacturers and those related to tourism and transportation.

We are putting in the work now to understand the scope of the problem and to develop a thoughtful, strategic plan to change these behaviors.

I cannot stress this enough: **A public service announcement telling people to stop littering is not going to solve this problem.**

We need a comprehensive plan that

1. Examines and strengthens **written expectations,**
2. Addresses **infrastructure** needs across the state and in our local communities,
3. Builds and utilizes **positive messaging that social norms the behaviors we want to see,**
and
4. Develops a system of **rewards and penalties** that supports them.

KPB, along with our state partners PennDOT and DEP, will be hosting a Litter Summit on **November 14, 2019** to share the results of our research. We will dive into the psychology behind littering behavior and introduce different behavior change strategies that will lead us to the environmental, economic and social impacts we desire.

We hope you will join us.

Keep America Beautiful Behavior Change System

