

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 8, 2020

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Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Provides Residents with an Option to Report Illegal Dumping that is on the Rise Due to Covid-19



Photo Credit TribLIVE

As an unintended consequence of the coronavirus pandemic, state parks, state forests, game lands and communities are seeing an increase in littering, including personal protective equipment such as gloves, wipes, and masks as well as an increase of larger items being dumped.

If you come across an illegal dumpsite, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful wants you to report it as part of their Illegal Dump Free PA Program, <https://illegaldumpfreepa.org/report-it/>. Dumpsite information will be logged and shared with local enforcement authorities, as well as local affiliates and state agency and other partners. Photos can be included in the report. Contact information of those reporting a site will be kept confidential. You can also report graffiti through this online form. Documenting illegal dumpsites is a critical step in educating people about illegal dumping on our lands and waters and ultimately in helping to restore the natural beauty of our state which is a priority for Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and our many partners.

Many trash haulers have temporarily suspended recycling programs and large or bulky item pick-up because of worker safety and other limitations. Most, if not all bulky waste pick-ups and special collections of electronics, tires and appliances have been postponed until late summer or fall.

The increased litter and dumping puts an undue strain on the already reduced staff at state and municipal parks and recreation departments across the state. Responding to and cleaning up

illegally dumped trash is taking up valuable time and resources that could be put to much better use during the COVID-19 crisis.

“The increase of litter and dumped trash is posing a threat to the environment as well as to those who clean it up. These items should be properly disposed of in the trash, not on the ground. Bulky items should be held onto until regular collections resume. There is never an acceptable time to litter or illegally dump. It’s reckless and unacceptable. It’s also a crime.” said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

Fines for littering and illegal dumping can be upwards of \$1,000. In addition to paying a fine, offenders may also be required to pay restitution and/or perform community service. For more information on littering and illegal dumping laws go to <https://illegaldumpfreepa.org/pennsylvania-littering-and-illegal-dumping-laws/>.

For problem areas, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s Illegal Dump Free PA program also offers a security camera loan program to curb illegal dumping by exposing those who commit this crime. The program offers three concealable, lockable cameras and accessories that capture usable, conviction-worthy footage of license plates and illegal dumpers – even at night and is available to municipalities and nonprofits. For more information visit <https://www.keeppabeautiful.org/illegal-dump-free-pa/> or contact Rob Dubas at rdubas@keeppabeautiful.org.

“It may seem like an opportune time to clean out your garage or basement, but with limited pick up services available, I worry where all that stuff is going to end up,” said Reiter. “Please hold off on large cleanups. If you plan to do a major clean out, please designate a corner of the garage for castoffs until we get through this pandemic. The most important thing is to keep everyone safe and healthy, including all of those essential workers, including our waste haulers and public works’ maintenance crews who are making sacrifices to serve our communities,” said Reiter.

To help protect Pennsylvanians’ health and safety, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful recently suspended its annual statewide Pick Up Pennsylvania initiative, which supports upwards of 5,000 cleanups each spring from March 1 through May 31. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful will support this initiative once the threat of COVID-19 passes and social distancing restrictions are lifted. For updates visit www.keeppabeautiful.org.

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About Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s mission is empowering Pennsylvanians to keep our communities clean and beautiful. Since 1990, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and its volunteers have removed over 147 million pounds of litter from Pennsylvania’s roadways, greenways, parks, forests, and waterways. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keeppabeautiful.org.