

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Trash Travels – Join Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful for the 2021 Pick Up Pennsylvania Program to Keep Our Waterways Clean

~ September 1 through November 30 ~



(September 7, 2021) To prevent litter from ending up in our waterways, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful urges Pennsylvania residents to participate in Pick Up Pennsylvania, in support of the Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup. This annual event is an opportunity to improve neighborhoods and Pennsylvania's waterways by coordinating or participating in a litter cleanup. Registration is now open at <https://www.keepabeautiful.org/programs/pick-up-pa/>.

This year's program runs from September 1 through November 30. During this period, registered events can get free trash bags and gloves provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, PennDOT and the Ocean Conservancy, as supplies last.

In addition to waterway cleanups, land-based cleanups are also eligible since a significant portion of waterway pollution originates on land. The results of a 2019 statewide study on litter, conducted by the Departments of Environmental Protection and Transportation and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, estimated that there are 502 million pieces of litter on Pennsylvania roadways. That litter could potentially end up in our oceans. Wind and rain wash litter into storm drains or directly into creeks and rivers that eventually flow to the ocean where it impacts marine life, human health and coastal economies.

Over 30% of all litter found on Pennsylvania roadways is plastic. Plastic litter left in the environment breaks down into extremely small pieces called microplastic. Microplastic is virtually impossible to retrieve from our lands and waters. Without an effective way to recover these tiny particles, they make their way into every aspect of lives, from the food and beverages we consume to rain and the air we breathe. Microplastics in our oceans fatally affects marine life, other wildlife and enters the food chain, threatening human health.

“The most powerful solution is to stop litter from entering our oceans in the first place by disposing of waste properly, reducing the amount of products we purchase, and improving waste management systems overall. You can help by cleaning up in and around your community! Grab a bag and collect litter from the side of the road, parks, fields and sidewalks

before it finds its way into a storm drain or local waterway,” said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

The Ocean Conservancy’s annual International Coastal Cleanup engages hundreds of thousands of volunteers from around the world to remove millions of pounds of plastics and debris from beaches, lakes and waterways. This event has grown to include participation by all 50 states and U.S. territories and 90 countries with the number growing each year. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is proud to coordinate this effort in Pennsylvania. In 2020, nearly 12,000 volunteers canvassed their communities to remove 777,650 pounds of trash and 122,600 pounds of tires from Pennsylvania’s lands, waterways and coastal regions from September through November.

Individuals, families, neighbors, students, civic organizations and local governments are all invited to participate. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful suggests following all applicable federal, state and local health and safety rules for Novel Coronavirus (Covid 19) in effect at the time of the event.

To register your cleanup event, visit keepabeautiful.org/programs/pick-up-pa/. Questions can be answered by Michelle Dunn, Pick Up Pennsylvania Program Coordinator, at 877-772-3673 ext. 113 or mdunn@keepabeautiful.org.

Current 2021 Pick Up Pennsylvania supporters include: Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania funded by the NiSource Charitable Foundation, The Giant Company, Coca-Cola, Pennsylvania Waste Industries Association, Wawa, Giant Eagle, Luminent - Fayette Energy Facility, Mahantango Enterprises, Inc., Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association, Republic Services and Wegmans.

If you are interested in making an investment in a cleaner Pennsylvania by becoming a supporter of the 2022 Pick Up Pennsylvania program, contact Shannon Reiter at 724-836-4121 or sreiter@keepabeautiful.org.

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About Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s vision is a clean and beautiful Pennsylvania. Since 1990, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has worked with hundreds of thousands of volunteers across the state to pick up nearly 148 million pounds of trash from Pennsylvania’s roadways, waterways, greenways, vacant lots, forestlands and other community spaces. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s core programming focuses on litter and illegal dump prevention, cleanup, community greening, and proper waste handling and sustainable practices. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful works with many partnering organizations on the state and grassroots level to accomplish our goal of a clean and beautiful Pennsylvania. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is the state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Inc., the nation’s largest volunteer-based community action and education organization. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keepabeautiful.org.