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Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and PennDOT partner on Cigarette Litter Prevention at Rest Stops



(May 10, 2023) Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful will continue its partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to implement the Cigarette Litter Prevention Program (CLPP) at rest stops across the state with a \$20,000 grant from Keep America Beautiful.

The CLPP program begins with a scan, or physical count, of cigarette butts and other tobacco related products in a designated area. Ash receptacles are then installed at transition points of entry, like entrances to public buildings. Two additional scans are performed, one midway through the year and a final count at the end of the program. The effectiveness of the program will be measured by comparing a pre and post program scan of physical count of cigarette butts and other tobacco products. The grant award includes funding for portable, or pocket ashtrays, to distribute to residents. Awardees agree to encourage the enforcement of litter laws, which includes cigarette litter, and include an education component about the consequences of cigarette and other tobacco related litter.

“We hope to raise awareness to travelers about the issue of proper cigarette butt disposal with messaging and marketing campaigns and placing ash receptacles at entrances to rest stop buildings. Last year, we worked with PennDOT to implement the program at 14 state welcome centers. We’re honored to continue this relationship to provide a place for travelers to dispose of their cigarette butts and other tobacco products,” said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has a partnership with TerraCycle to expand the program to include recycling and composting of the cigarette butt waste. Cigarettes collected through CLPP are shipped to TerraCycle where the various materials that make up a cigarette are separated and processed. The filters are melted into hard plastic that can be remolded to make new recycled industrial products, such as plastic pallets. The residual tobacco and paper are separated out and composted in a specialized process.

“We’re shining a light on this program to emphasize that even the smallest pieces of litter, like a cigarette butt, when disposed of responsibly can make a huge difference. Not only can we reduce the amount of cigarette and tobacco products that are littered, but the collected butts can be recycled into something useful,” said Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. “We are honored to partner with PennDOT to assure our welcome centers are clean

and beautiful for visitors and residents alike and we're grateful to Keep America Beautiful for the funding that allows us to continue to invest in this highly effective program."

According to Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's 2019 Pennsylvania Litter Research Study, over 500 million pieces of litter were found on Pennsylvania's roadways. Of the total estimated litter, 186.2 million or 37.1 percent were cigarette butts.

Cigarette butts that are thrown on the ground can contaminate soil and ground water with chemicals and heavy metals; fatally impact birds, animals and marine life who often mistake them for food; and the filters, made of cellulose acetate, never fully disappear from the environment.

To find out more about the Cigarette Litter Prevention Program, visit keeppabeautiful.org and choose Programs, then Cigarette Litter Prevention Program or contact Michelle Dunn, Program Coordinator, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful at mdunn@keeppabeautiful.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 155 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.keeppabeautiful.org.