

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and PA Turnpike Commission partner on Cigarette Litter Prevention at Up to 17 Service Plazas

(July 30, 2024) Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful will partner with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to implement the Cigarette Litter Prevention Program (CLPP) at up to 17 service plazas and interchange access buildings across the state with a \$20,000 grant received from Keep America Beautiful.

The CLPP program will begin with a scan, or physical count, of cigarette butts and other tobacco related products littering each service plaza. Ash receptacles will then be installed at the entrance to buildings and other transition points. Two additional scans will be 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 the pre and post program scan of the physical count of cigarette butts and other tobacco products. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful will provide educational messaging about the consequences of cigarette and other tobacco related litter for displaying at participating service plazas.

“The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and our Sustainability Committee are proud to partner with Keep PA Beautiful to enhance current efforts to curb cigarette litter at our service plazas,” said Keith Jack, Director of Facilities Operations and co-chair of the Turnpike’s Sustainability Committee. “With more than 550,000 daily users across our system, we also hope to bolster awareness to travelers about the issue of proper cigarette butt disposal with educational messaging and marketing campaigns and by placing cigarette ash receptacles at entrances to service plaza buildings and other high-volume transition points.”

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has a partnership with TerraCycle to recycle and compost the cigarette butt waste that is collected. 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,” said Kathryn Hartzell, the Turnpike’s Director of Technology and Innovation and co-chair of the Sustainability Committee. “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. We’re grateful to Keep America Beautiful for the funding that allows us to continue to invest in this highly effective program.”

“Access to ash receptacles and public education are useful tools to help reduce the most littered item in our litter stream. We are excited to partner with the PA Turnpike Commission to reduce the amount of cigarette butts and tobacco products littered at service plazas across the state,” said Shannon Reiter, President, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

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 keepbeautiful.org and choose Programs, then Cigarette Litter Prevention Program or contact Michelle Dunn, Program Coordinator, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful at mdunn@keepbeautiful.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 158 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.keepbeautiful.org.

About the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission

Protecting the environment through sustainability has been a guiding principle within the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (PTC) for more than three decades. The first state agency to achieve this score, the PTC has earned a 100% score from the GreenGov Council for two consecutive years. PTC has earned two IBTTA Toll Excellence Awards for Social Responsibility for both its sustainability program and stormwater management program. To learn more about the PTC’s efforts to becoming America’s First Sustainable Superhighway by 2040, [please visit its website](#).