



**For Release May 8, 2025**

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## **Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Deploys Third Litter Control Boom at Erie Water Works**

*~ Partnering with Erie Water Works and Local Organizations to Keep Presque Isle Bay and Lake Erie Clean and Beautiful~*

With funding from the Department of Environmental Protection Coastal Resource Management, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is continuing its collaboration with numerous individuals, organizations, and businesses to actively address and combat litter that makes its way into the waters of Presque Isle Bay, Lake Erie, and ultimately the ocean. Through the installation of litter control booms, devices designed to capture floating debris and prevent its spread, this initiative actively works to safeguard waterways by collecting and removing trash before it can cause further environmental harm.

On May 8, a litter control boom was deployed on Erie Water Works property, the third such installation in Presque Isle Bay. This deployment coincides with Safe Drinking Water Week, observed from May 4 to 10, which aims to increase public understanding of water systems and the vital role of safe drinking water. Following the deployment of the litter boom, a cleanup of the bay and shoreline at Erie Water Works property was held to support ongoing efforts to reduce pollution and protect the local ecosystem. Volunteers worked to remove debris and raise awareness about the impact of waste on water quality.

Nearly 12 million people rely on Lake Erie for their drinking water, underscoring the importance of preventing trash and debris from entering the lake and actively removing any pollution that does occur. Clean, dependable drinking water is essential, not just for public health, but also for economic prosperity and maintaining a high quality of life.

“Presque Isle Bay and Lake Erie are more than just waterways, they are lifelines for millions of people who depend on them for public health, prosperity, and recreation. Protecting our water

source by deploying litter control booms highlights what can be accomplished when local partners collaborate to take action and implement solutions that have meaningful impacts on our environment. Clean water is a shared responsibility, and today's efforts will help to enhance the future of these ecosystems for generations to come," said Craig Palmer, CEO, Erie Water Works.

In 2023, two booms were installed on the leased-campus of Lakeshore Towing Services, on property owned by the Erie Pennsylvania Port Authority.

The new litter boom site is located in an unnamed tributary to Presque Isle Bay, adjacent to a stormwater discharge outfall on property owned by Erie Water Works. The new site will be added to the rounds for interns from the Regional Science Consortium (RSC) at Tom Ridge Environmental Center (TREC), who will continue to monitor the sites, collect the trash that accumulates in the booms and evaluate the data.

An analysis of the thousands of pieces of litter captured by the booms during the pilot phase, indicated cigarette butt litter was the most prevalent, followed by foam pieces, then plastic pieces. Future analyses will examine the occurrence of correlations between meteorological conditions and the presence of litter. Information gleaned from this program will aid in determining how to reduce the amount of trash entering the waterway.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is distributing portable ashtrays to adult tobacco users at various marinas along Presque Isle and shoreline that are under the jurisdiction of the Port Authority to reduce the amount of cigarette butts and other tobacco products that make their way into the waterway.

"Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is grateful for this collaborative effort to keep Presque Isle Bay and Lake Erie clean and beautiful. Not only does trash adversely affect water quality, it harms wildlife, the local economy and tourism. Every cigarette butt and piece of litter that is disposed properly is a step closer to cleaner and safer waterways," said Don Benczkowski, Program Coordinator, Lake Erie Region, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful will report results to the Ocean Conservancy who will analyze litter trends and sources.



Craig Palmer, CEO, Erie Water Works (6<sup>th</sup> from left, back) and Erie Water Works employees picked up 10 bags of trash and four tires from the area between the Erie Water Works administration building and the outfall.



Litter boom installed on Erie Water Works property.

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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 162 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](http://www.keeppabeautiful.org).