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Protecting Presque Isle Bay and Lake Erie: Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Expands Anti-Litter Programs with Key Partners

*~ Cigarette Litter Prevention and Recycling Program, Clean Marinas Program
and Litter Free School Zone Program ~*

With funding from the PA Department of Environmental Protection's Coastal Resources Management Program and Keep America Beautiful, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful continues its collaboration with local agencies, organizations, and businesses to protect the waters of Presque Isle Bay, Lake Erie, and beyond through targeted litter prevention and recycling initiatives.

In partnership with the Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is implementing the Cigarette Litter Prevention and Recycling Program. The program is funded by Keep America Beautiful and is the nation's largest program aimed at reducing cigarette litter as part of The Greatest American Cleanup Campaign. The program will be implemented at local marinas who share our commitment to keep PA waterways free of tobacco-related litter. The Cigarette Litter Prevention and Recycling Program uses education, infrastructure that includes fixed receptacles at transition points, and pocket ashtray distribution to keep shorelines clean and free of tobacco related litter.

The Regional Science Consortium (RSC), in collaboration with the Erie-Western PA Port Authority and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, launched a new Boat Shrink Wrap Recycling Program under the Clean Marinas initiative. Funded by the Department of Environmental Protection's Coastal Resources Management Program, the program supports Pennsylvania's efforts to join other Great Lakes states in using best management practices to protect the intersection of land and water from litter and pollutants. The program recently shipped 2,500 pounds of shrink wrap to Fireland Local LLC, where it will be cleaned, bailed, and delivered to Mondo Polymer Technologies. The wrap will be converted into guardrail offset blocks.

“Thanks to our partnership with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and the Erie-Western PA Port Authority, the Regional Science Consortium was able to successfully launch its first year of the Clean Marina program by initiating the boat shrink wrap recycling at marinas. Boat shrink wrap is the largest single-use plastic and it is concentrated on the shores of waterways. The collection and recycling of this plastic prevented it from getting into the water and diverted it from the landfill. The material was recycled into guardrail offset blocks which are now protecting thousands of miles of highway. We are looking forward to more marinas participating next season,” said Jeanette Schnars, Ph.D., Executive Director, Regional Science Consortium.

To foster environmental stewardship among youth, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and the RSC are offering the Litter Free School Zone Program to Erie-area schools. The program provides an opportunity to teach students community stewardship and leadership skills while keeping the school grounds litter free. Participating schools will receive signage and cleanup kits to support student-led campus cleanup projects that meet required environmental education requirements.

“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. These programs are practical ways to involve communities, encourage partnerships, protect natural resources, and encourage responsible habits,” said Don Benczkowski, Program Coordinator, Lake Erie Region, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful.

In addition, Erie residents and volunteers will also be mobilizing as part of the Ocean Conservancy’s International Coastal Cleanup, the world’s largest volunteer initiative to keep trash from reaching our waterways and oceans. Cleanups will be held in various locations along Lake Erie on Saturday, September 20, 2025 from 9am to noon. All are welcome to participate. For more information and to register to participate, go to www.eriecountypa.gov/icc.

For more information, visit 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 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.