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**DEP and Partners Join in Litter Cleanup in Luzerne, Call on All Pennsylvanians to Help “Pick Up Pennsylvania” This Fall**

*Local cleanup events happening now through November 30*

**​Harrisburg, PA** –ThePennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) partnered with local leaders in Luzerne Borough in a litter cleanup on Toby Creek today and called on all Pennsylvanians to join in the “Pick Up Pennsylvania” statewide fall campaign to clean up streams, rivers, and lakes in their community.

"Pick Up Pennsylvania, which began in 2004, is a lynchpin in the anti-litter movement growing in Pennsylvania, and DEP is pleased to support this grassroots campaign for community volunteers,” said DEP Acting Secretary Ramez Ziadeh.

DEP Northeast Region Acting Director Joe Buczynski joined leaders from the Luzerne County Citizens’ Blight Committee, Keep Northeastern Pennsylvania Beautiful, and other community volunteers at the creek cleanup near the borough fire hall this morning.

“Anyone who frequents their local creek or stream, whether for swimming, fishing, kayaking, or other recreation, can tell you how unpleasant it is to have to look at trash while trying to enjoy the water,” said Buczynski. “DEP is pleased to join forces with the Luzerne County Citizens’ Blight Committee and our regional Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful chapter, who make a positive impact in our area and serve as a statewide model.”

The Pick Up Pennsylvania fall campaign runs September 1 through November 30 each year. It’s coordinated by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and sponsored by DEP, PennDOT, and the Ocean Conservancy International Coastal Zone Cleanup. This support provides registered events with free trash bags and gloves.

“PennDOT spends nearly 14 million dollars a year cleaning up litter along Pennsylvania’s roadways, money that should be spent to maintain and improve our transportation network,” said PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian. “We are grateful to the many community volunteers who help clean up litter during Pick Up Pennsylvania and throughout the year.”

Residents can use this [Events Calendar](https://cleanup.keeppabeautiful.org/Calendar.html) to join Pick Up Pennsylvania cleanup events in their community. Those who’d like to register their own local cleanup event can do so at [Organize an Event](https://www.keeppabeautiful.org/programs/pick-up-pa/organize-an-event/). Individuals, families, neighbors, students, civic organizations, and local governments are invited to participate.

During the 2021 Pick Up Pennsylvania fall campaign, nearly 14,000 volunteers canvassed their communities to remove 745,380 pounds of trash and 99,200 pounds of tires from Pennsylvania’s lands, waterways and coastal regions.

“When we formed the Luzerne County Citizens Blight Committee, we knew about the problem of trash and illegal dumping spots in the northeast and we knew something had to be done,” said Greg Griffin, head of the committee. “Our group is committed to getting rid of trash so the area can look nice and clean for residents and visitors to enjoy.”

Since the committee formed in 2018, members have voluntarily picked up hundreds of tons of trash along highways, wooded areas, creeks, streams, and other problem spots throughout northeast Pennsylvania.

The Wolf Administration released its [Litter Action Plan](https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Land/Waste/littering/Pages/Litter-Action-Plan.aspx) in 2021 in response to a 2019 Pennsylvania Litter Research Study which found Pennsylvania has more than 500 million pieces of litter on its roadways. The action plan includes strategies for all Pennsylvanians to fight litter in their communities. As part of the plan, the state [launched a public awareness campaign, PA Fights Dirty, this summer](https://dced.pa.gov/newsroom/wolf-administration-calls-on-pennsylvanians-to-fight-dirty-in-new-anti-litter-campaign/). The campaign calls upon Pennsylvanians to ensure every piece of their trash, regardless of size, is disposed of properly.

DEP identifies many ways Pennsylvanians can be anti-litter at [www.dep.pa.gov/litter](http://www.dep.pa.gov/litter).

PennDOT provides many additional litter cleanup volunteer opportunities, including Adopt-A-Highway, Litter Brigades, and more at their [roadside beautification web page](https://www.penndot.pa.gov/about-us/RoadsideBeautification/Pages/default.aspx).

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that about 80% of marine debris originates as land trash.

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