

PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCED TO REDUCE LITTER AND IMPROPER DISPOSAL OF PPE TDOT, TDEC and KTnB Partner to Spread Awareness

In response to the current pandemic, the Tennessee Department of Transportation is announcing a new partnership with the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation and Keep Tennessee Beautiful to reduce PPE litter and promote behaviors for the proper disposal of masks/PPE. The partnership will feature a series of social media posts highlighting proper PPE disposal and TDOT's "Nobody Trashes Tennessee" litter prevention campaign. Posts and additional messaging will be shared electronically by all three entities and made available through KTnB and their statewide network of affiliates.

"This partnership is a response to a rise in PPE litter which TDOT has begun to notice on rights-of-way, and how we, as state agencies, can work together to share one impactful message," TDOT Commissioner Clay Bright said.

All social media posts will have common messaging including:

- * Single use masks, gloves, and wipes should not be placed into any recycling containers or disposed of on the ground. Improper disposal creates health and environmental hazards.
- * All PPE should be properly disposed of in a trash receptacle.
- * Wearing a reusable or cloth mask instead of single-use masks can reduce the amount of PPE waste going to landfills and help fight the spread of COVID-19.

"In these unusual times, unusual problems arise, and the litter of personal protective equipment is an example," TDEC Commissioner David Salyers said. "We encourage all Tennesseans to be mindful of this issue and maintain their commitment to the beauty of our state. We are grateful to TDOT and Keep Tennessee Beautiful for their partnership in this effort."

TDOT is doing its part to meet these challenges by spending \$15 million annually on litter pickup and prevention education and has decreased the amount of roadside litter by 43% since 2006. Still, at any given time, nearly 100 million pieces of litter occur on Tennessee roadsides. For more information on this and TDOT's Nobody Trashes Tennessee litter prevention campaign, visit: <https://nobodytrashestennessee.com/>.

Keep Tennessee Beautiful is an adjunct service of the University of Memphis and provides expertise in litter prevention education, litter law enforcement, community beautification, and volunteer recruitment and management. This expertise is delivered across the State of Tennessee through a network of 33 local affiliates. Information about Keep Tennessee Beautiful can be found at <https://www.keeptnbeautiful.org/>.

The Division of Solid Waste Management within TDEC oversees various solid waste and recycling programs. For more information on the proper disposal of COVID 19 PPE, please go to the following link: <https://www.tn.gov/environment/program-areas/sw-solid-waste.html>.