



ILLEGAL DUMP FREE PA

Municipalities Tool Kit



KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION

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Click on the green circle after each section header,
then highlight, copy and paste the text into a word document.

Sample Letter to District Magistrates

Dear [Magistrate Name]:

I am writing to alert you to a new program underway in your District aimed to curb illegal dumping. According to a recent study commissioned by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB), the state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, and sponsored by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), illegal dumping is a state-wide concern. Dumpsites can be found in every county in the state – 6,500 at last count.

In addition to contaminating our soil, surface and groundwater supplies, illegal dumps are unsightly and negatively impact property values. They are a public health hazard, attracting disease-spreading rodents and mosquitos. Socially, they send a message that no one cares about the community or property, affecting the quality of life.

Cleanups conducted by local municipalities are costly, averaging about \$600 per ton, or roughly \$3,000 per site and divert tax dollars and staff resources that could be better spent on community infrastructure, parks or social programs. Further, cleanups are only a response to the illegal activity and do not deter future dumping – even at the same site.

In a public opinion poll KPB conducted with Penn State University, the majority of respondents believed fines and penalties should be used to clean up dumpsites, rather than public funds. Unfortunately, the evidence needed was non-existent, difficult to obtain, or insufficient to support enforcement actions. Until now.

Beginning [Date], [Municipality] became part of the solution by participating in the IllegalDumpFreePA program. Provided through KPB and financially supported through a grant from DEP, IllegalDumpFreePA provides municipalities with a surveillance camera kit to be placed at illegal dumping hot spots. The kit includes three cameras with wireless technology that capture usable, conviction-worthy photos of vehicle license plates and illegal dumpers – even at night – and alert authorities instantly via text messaging.

The program was rolled out as a pilot in 2013 and was instrumental in prosecution and convictions in several counties. To view press coverage generated as a result of these efforts, including an investigative report by Pittsburgh's WPXI, please visit the Enforcement page under "Keep It" on our website, IllegalDumpFreePA.org.

Convicting those responsible and holding them accountable for the cost of cleanups and to the local community can be a strong deterrent. This program provides the evidence needed to fully prosecute those committing this crime. Through strong enforcement programs and broad public education, KPB with the support of municipalities believes that we can ultimately change the habits and behavior of others and end the practice of illegal dumping.

Please visit our website at www.keppabeautiful.org to view our recently released report *Illegal Dumping in Pennsylvania: A Decade of Discovery* that includes our recommended policies and programs for future prevention and enforcement. If you would like more information, contact [designee] at [contact information] or visit www.IllegalDumpFreePA.org.

Respectfully,

[KPB LOCAL REP]



Sample Letter to Legislators

Dear [Legislator]:

I am writing to you today to alert you to a new program underway in your District aimed to curb illegal dumping. According to a recent study commissioned by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB), the state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, and sponsored by the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), illegal dumping is a state-wide concern. Dumpsites can be found in every county in the state –6,500 at last count.

In addition to contaminating our soil, surface and groundwater supplies, illegal dumps are unsightly and negatively impact property values. They are a public health hazard as they attract disease-spreading rodents and mosquitos, giving them a place to live and breed. Socially, they send a message that no one cares about the community or property, negatively impacting the quality of life.

Cleanups conducted by local municipalities are costly, averaging about \$600 per ton, or roughly \$3,000 per site, and divert tax dollars and staff resources that could be better spent on community infrastructure, parks or social programs. Further, cleanups are only a response to the illegal activity and do not deter future dumping – even at the same site

In a public opinion poll KPB conducted with Penn State University, the majority of respondents believed fines and penalties should be used to clean up illegal dumpsites, rather than public funds. Unfortunately, the evidence needed was non-existent, difficult to obtain, or insufficient to support enforcement actions. Until now.

Beginning [Date], [Municipality] became part of the solution by partnering with KPB to help curb illegal dumping by participating in the IllegalDumpFreePA program.

IllegalDumpFreePA is provided through a KPB and financially supported through a grant from the PA Department of Environmental Protection. Under the program, municipalities are provided a surveillance camera kit developed by KPB and placed at illegal dumping hot spots in the community. The kit includes three cameras with wireless technology that capture usable, conviction-worthy pictures of vehicle license plates and people illegally dumping waste – even at night – and alert authorities instantly via text messaging. The program was rolled out as a pilot in 2013 and was instrumental in prosecution and convictions in several counties.

Convicting those responsible for illegal dumping and holding those accountable for the cost of cleanups and to the local community can be a strong deterrent. This program provides the evidence needed to fully prosecute those committing this crime. Through strong enforcement programs and broad public education, KPB with the support of municipalities believes that we can ultimately change the habits and behavior of others and end the practice of illegal dumping.

Please visit www.keppabeautiful.org to view our recently released report *Illegal Dumping in Pennsylvania: A Decade of Discovery* that includes our recommended policies and programs for future prevention and enforcement. If you would like more information, please contact [designee] at [contact information] or visit www.IllegalDumpFreePA.org.

Respectfully,

[KPB LOCAL REP]



Sample Media Alert

Letterhead Optional

MEDIA ALERT

[County] and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Expose Illegal Dumpers

Hidden Camera Program Aims to Curb Illegal Dumping

What: Introduction of the IllegalDumpFreePA program in [County]

Where: [Address]

When: [Date and Time]

Background and Details:

Illegal dumping is a state-wide epidemic, according to a recent study commissioned by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB), the state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful and sponsored by the PA Department of Environmental Protection. Dumpsites can be found in every county in the state –6,500 at last count.

In addition to contaminating our soil, surface and groundwater supplies, illegal dumps are unsightly and negatively impact property values. They are a public health hazard as they attract disease-spreading rodents and mosquitos by giving them a place to live and breed. Socially, they send a message that no one cares about the community or property, and quality of life can be negatively impacted.

Cleanups conducted by local municipalities are costly, averaging about \$600 per ton, or roughly \$3,000 per site and divert tax dollars and staff resources that could be better spent on community infrastructure, parks, or social programs. Further, Cleanups are only a response to the illegal activity and do not deter future dumping even at the same site. Unfortunately, the evidence needed to assess fines and penalties is often non-existent, difficult to obtain, or insufficient to support enforcement actions. Until now.

Beginning [Date], [County] will become one of the organization's partners in helping to curb illegal dumping by exposing those who commit this crime.

Through a program provided by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and financially supported through a grant from the PA Department of Environmental Protection, [Municipality] in [County] received a surveillance camera kit to be placed at undisclosed illegal dumping hot spots. The kit includes three concealable, lockable cameras and wireless technology that can capture usable, conviction-worthy footage of license plates and dumpers – even at night – and alert authorities instantly via text messaging.

This program will provide the evidence needed to fully prosecute those committing this crime. Through strong enforcement programs and broad public education, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, with the support of municipalities, believes that they can ultimately change the habits and behavior of others and end the practice of illegal dumping.

Visuals:

Your editorial coverage is encouraged for this event. This is a program for communities that want to take action to stop illegal dumping. A brief 5-minute program showcasing the camera program will be made to the media, along with still shots of post-conviction camera footage.

Available for Interviews: [Names of Local Authorities and Other Parties Involved]

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Media Contact: [Name] [Email] [Contact Number]

For More Information: www.IllegalDumpFreePA.org



Sample Media Release

Media Contact:

[NAME], [PHONE], [EMAIL]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[MUNICIPALITY or COUNTY] and Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Partner to Curb Illegal Dumping

Hidden Camera Program Aims to Curb Illegal Dumping

[Location, PA] – Illegal dumping is a state-wide concern, according to a recent study commissioned by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB), the state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful and sponsored by the Department of Environmental Protection. Dumpsites can be found in every county – 6,500 at last count.

In addition to contaminating our soil, surface and groundwater supplies, illegal dumps are unsightly and negatively impact property values. They are a public health hazard as they attract disease-spreading rodents and mosquitos by giving them a place to live and breed. Socially, they send a message that no one cares about the community or property, and quality of life can be negatively impacted.

Cleanups conducted by local municipalities are costly, averaging about \$600 per ton, or roughly \$3,000 per site and divert tax dollars and staff resources that could be better spent on community infrastructure, parks, or social programs. Further, cleanups are only a response to the illegal activity and do not deter future dumping even at the same site.

“Those funds could be better spent elsewhere, such as parks, children’s or seniors’ programs, or community infrastructure,” said KPB President Shannon Reiter. “Pennsylvanians can no longer afford to continually clean up these sites.”

In a public opinion poll Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful conducted with Penn State University, the majority of respondents stated that they believe fines and penalties levied on illegal dumpers should be used to clean up illegal dumpsites, rather than public funds. Unfortunately, the evidence needed to assess fines and penalties was non-existent, difficult to obtain, or insufficient to support enforcement actions, until now.

Beginning [MONTH], a new program will help to curb illegal dumping by exposing those who commit this crime.

Through a program provided by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and financially supported through a grant from the PA Department of Environmental Protection, various communities will receive a surveillance kit to be placed at undisclosed locations as part of the IllegalDumpFreePA program. The kit includes three concealable, lockable cameras and accessories that capture usable, conviction-worthy footage of license plates and illegal dumpers – even at night. One camera uses wireless technology that can send pictures via text to a registered cellphone when triggered, providing almost instant results.

“Cleanups, while necessary, simply absolve the dumpers of any responsibility,” said Reiter. “This program provides the evidence needed to fully prosecute those committing this crime.”

Continued on next page

Sample Media Release – Continued

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful will provide technical assistance for installation. Municipalities will have the option to purchase the equipment at the end of the grant period. A 2013 pilot program was instrumental in prosecution and convictions in Allegheny, Armstrong and Elk counties.

[QUOTE FROM OFFICIAL]

The IllegalDumpFreePA program is one of the many resources Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful uses to reduce both the environmental and financial impacts of illegal dumping and littering. Other efforts include the Great American Cleanup of Pennsylvania, the Litter Free School Zone, and the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Adoption Program.

For more information, visit www.IllegalDumpFreePA.org.

About Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful's mission is empowering Pennsylvanians to make our communities clean and beautiful. Since 1990, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and its volunteers have removed over 113 million pounds of litter from Pennsylvania's roadways, greenways, parks, forests, and waterways. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keeppabeautiful.org.

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Sample Conviction Press Release

[Name, Municipality], [Phone], [Email], [Date]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Illegal Dumping Activity Caught on Camera Leads to Conviction in [Municipality] *Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful Camera Loan Program Key to Prosecution*

[Municipality, County, PA]: [Municipality] officials, through a recent equipment grant award from Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, installed surveillance equipment at active illegal dumping sites within the township, many of them along remote stretches of rural roads.

The cameras helped officials charge and convict [Name], who on [Date] was issued a citation for dumping illegally. Police said [Name] was caught dumping [items illegally dumped] by a motion-sensitive surveillance camera, provided by Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. On [Date], [Name] was found guilty by the Honorable [District Magistrate], [Magisterial District], and was fined [dollar amount] for the crime.

[Quote from Municipal Official]

The cameras are part of the IllegalDumpFreePA program, where Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is working to support and bolster enforcement efforts to deter illegal dumping statewide. “The challenges are many when it comes to enforcement of laws against illegal dumping and much of it comes down to limited resources,” explained Shannon Reiter, President of Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful. “Our goal was to find a cost-effective way for local authorities to capture photographic evidence efficiently. Surveillance cameras and strengthened enforcement partnerships make it difficult to anonymously dump and escape prosecution.”

The motion-activated, covert security camera package provides instant wireless transmission of site activity, photo documentation of license plates at speeds up to 50 MPH, and clear photos of activity, day or night. The cameras will be repositioned within the municipality as needed.

Funding for surveillance support was provided to Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful by the PA Department of Environmental Protection.

About Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful’s mission is empowering Pennsylvanians to make our communities clean and beautiful. Since 1990, Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful and its volunteers have removed over 113 million pounds of litter from Pennsylvania’s roadways, greenways, parks, forests, and waterways. To learn more about Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, visit www.keppabeautiful.org.

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Sample Letter to the Editor

We ALL Pay for Illegal Dumping

Dear Editor,

I saw a pile of trash the other day along the side of the road and just kept thinking, who is going to clean that up, and who was going to pay for it?

More often than not, that duty falls to our public works department, which means that everyone pays! According to Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful, illegal dumping is costing our community more than \$600 a ton, or nearly \$3000 for each site.

Illegal dumping is a state-wide concern. Dumpsites can be found in every county – 6,500 at last count. In addition to contaminating our soil, surface and groundwater supplies, illegal dumps are unsightly and negatively impact property values. They are a public health hazard as they attract disease-spreading rodents and mosquitos.

Many times that trash rolls down into streams or waterways, contaminating or obstructing the water flow which, in turn, also contributes to flooding.

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has recently launched IllegalDumpFreePA, a program aimed at curbing illegal dumping. The program provides municipalities with a surveillance camera kit to be placed at illegal dumping hot spots. These cameras can capture usable, conviction-worthy photos of vehicle license plates and illegal dumpers – even at night – and alert authorities instantly.

Convicting those responsible and holding them accountable for the cost of cleanups and to the local community can be a strong deterrent. This program provides the evidence needed to fully prosecute those committing this crime.

Think about how those cleanup funds could have been spent – on parks, programs for our children or senior citizens, or for improving infrastructure. I urge this community to consider becoming part of the IllegalDumpFreePA solution. I'd like to see whoever is responsible for trashing our community pay for the cleanup themselves because when the township is responsible, in the end, everyone in the community pays.

At minimum, it sends a message that we don't care about our community. We need to do better, we need to be better. This is where we live.

[NAME]
[LOCATION]



Sample Op-Ed

[Date]
[Newspaper Name]
[Address]

We All Pay for Illegal Dumping

[Name of municipality] has experienced the ill effects of illegal dumping for years. In addition to contaminating our soil, surface and groundwater supplies, illegal dumps are unsightly and negatively impact property values. They are a public health hazard as they attract disease-spreading rodents and mosquitos by giving them a place to live and breed. Socially, they send a message that no one cares about the community or property, and quality of life can be negatively impacted.

Cleanups conducted by [municipality] are costly, averaging about \$600 per ton, or roughly \$3,000 per site and divert tax dollars and staff resources that could be better spent on community infrastructure, parks, or social programs. Further, cleanups are only a response to the illegal activity and do not deter future dumping even at the same site.

Our community cannot afford this any longer! [municipality] will be on the lookout for evidence among the illegally dumped trash and we will work with local authorities to prosecute offenders to the fullest extent of the law!

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has recently launched IllegalDumpFreePA, a program aimed at curbing illegal dumping. The program provides municipalities with a surveillance camera kit to be placed at illegal dumping hot spots. These cameras can capture usable, conviction-worthy photos of vehicle license plates and illegal dumpers – even at night – and alert authorities instantly. I urge our community to check out this program, IllegalDumpFreePA.org

Illegal dumping is a community problem. We all need to act responsibly. Here are a few things residents can do: When hiring contractors, make it clear that you will not pay them until after they have given you the dated receipt from the proper disposal site to which they have taken your trash and contact your local municipality or Recycling Coordinator for disposal options for items not picked up at the curb or if you are unsure of how to dispose of something. And finally, be on the lookout for dumpers! If you can, get a license plate number and call the local authorities about any suspicious behavior.

I would like to encourage a continued community conversation about this issue, and see if we can work together to eliminate illegal dumping in [municipality].

Sincerely,

[Name, title]



Program FAQ

IllegalDumpFreePA Program Fact Sheet

How big an issue is illegal dumping in Pennsylvania?

In a word, huge. KPB has identified 6,500 dumpsites across the Commonwealth and they can be found in every county. They're unsightly and have a negative impact on the environment. What most people don't realize is that illegal dumping is a **crime** that hurts communities, businesses and honest citizens.

Cleanups cost about \$600 per ton, and average around \$3,000 per site. When you factor in the costs of labor and resource-intensive investigation by your local authorities, it becomes even more expensive. That's money that could be better spent elsewhere in your community.

Is there a better solution?

Yes. Simply cleaning up illegal dumpsites does not stop the problem, and it just absolves the dumpers of any responsibility. Studies show that convictions and higher, consistent fines are strong deterrents. In other words, treat the act like the crime it is. However, too many dumpers are found not guilty without tangible proof.

What is IllegalDumpFreePA?

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful has launched a program for communities who are tired of illegal dumping and want to do something about it. IllegalDumpFreePA is a cost-effective way for your local law enforcement officials to capture strong photographic evidence of illegal dumpers through low-cost cameras and wireless technology.

How does it work?

The surveillance kit includes three concealable, lockable cameras and accessories that can capture usable, conviction-worthy footage of license plates and dumpers – even at night. One of the cameras uses wireless technology that can send a picture via text to a registered cellphone when triggered, providing almost instant results. No one has to go to the location and physically remove a memory card, or deal with wires if the cameras need to be re-positioned. Representatives from Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful will provide technical assistance for installation. Once a conviction is landed, some photos will be posted to a section of the KPB website and social media channels as a reminder that this is a criminal act. Images will be displayed in accordance with the parameters set forth by local and state laws.

Your community will be able to apply for participation beginning in March 2015. The program is designed as a lease, but there is an option to purchase the equipment at the end of the loan period.

What prompted the launch of the program?

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful conducted a decade long statewide illegal dump survey covering 67 counties, and also worked on a consumer-based survey in conjunction with Penn State University. The results from those projects showed us just how serious the issue was and how consumers felt about illegal dumping, recycling and waste disposal.

KPB launched a pilot program in 2013 in a five county region to see just how it would work. We are pleased to report that the program has been instrumental in prosecution and conviction of individuals from Allegheny, Armstrong and Elk counties. Similar programs have been tried in other states and have been extremely successful.

Continued on next page

Program FAQ – Continued

What would you hope to accomplish?

Both the public and KPB would like to see several actions occur. Not surprisingly, most consumers surveyed want to have more convenient access to waste and recycling services. More than 90 percent would like to see fines from illegal dumping going toward site cleanup.

On the commercial side, building contractors, remodelers, roofers and tire and junk haulers should be more regulated for proper waste management, as some of the most commonly dumped items are from those industries.

Isn't this basically a "public shaming" campaign?

No. The intent of this program is not to embarrass rogue individuals or businesses, but to help local communities and law enforcement officials who are tired of illegal dumping and want to do something about it.

While we know that illegal dumping will never be completely eradicated, we believe this public exposure will bring increased social pressure to do more to enforce and enhance existing laws – as well as educate and change the behavior of those committing this crime.

Who is Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful?

Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful is the state affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, the nation's largest volunteer-based community action and education organization. Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful advances its mission through a statewide network of County based affiliates. Our mission and vision is simple – a clean and beautiful Pennsylvania.

For More Information

Visit www.IllegalDumpFreePA.org

