



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Lawrence Hajna (609) 984-1795
Caryn Shinske (609) 292-2994

**ACTING COMMISSIONER LATOURETTE ANNOUNCES \$20.7 MILLION IN
CLEAN COMMUNITIES GRANTS, URGES USE OF REUSABLE SHOPPING BAGS
IN ADVANCE OF NEW SINGLE-USE PLASTICS LAW**

(21/P16) PATERSON – During a news conference at Great Falls National Park, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Acting Commissioner Shawn LaTourette today announced the award of \$20.7 million in grants to help municipalities and counties implement programs to clean up and reduce litter in communities across New Jersey.

The Acting Commissioner, demonstrating the Murphy Administration’s commitment to cleaner communities, also urged the public to use re-usable shopping bags in advance of the state’s new law protecting New Jersey’s environment against certain single-use plastics. This law takes effect next year.

“We are pleased to provide these grants that have long funded important anti-litter programs in communities throughout the state, including cleanups and public education programs,” **Acting Commissioner LaTourette** said. “DEP is grateful for the continued partnership of New Jersey Clean Communities and all of the municipalities that make litter reduction a priority for their residents. We can all do our part in being mindful about littering and the toll it takes on our communities and make it a priority to responsibly manage trash in our homes and at our places of business. Now is the best time to start new litter-reducing habits, including switching to eco-friendly re-usable bags for shopping and picking up take-out food.”

“The City of Paterson is excited that it will be receiving over \$190,000 through the Clean Communities program.” said Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh. “These state dollars will help us move rapidly to clean up litter hotspots, illegal dumping sites, and obtain equipment to ensure a cleaner and safer Paterson.”

“I join the Department of Environmental Protection in celebrating this occasion, and express a deep gratitude for all those over the years who have fought the fight and continue to see the value of the great outdoors in our Garden State, including right here in my hometown of Paterson,” said New Jersey State Senator Nellie Pou. “We must never take our public lands and green spaces for granted. Indeed, their value to us as a people and culture cannot be measured by dollars and cents, but by the utter beauty and enjoyment they bring to our lives.”

For a video of Acting Commissioner LaTourette on the single-use plastics law, visit <https://youtu.be/pcQx1T8uJo0>

\$20.7 Million in Clean Communities Grants to Prevent Litter Statewide

Over the years, the DEP has provided municipalities and counties hundreds of millions of dollars in Clean Communities grants to implement litter cleanup and abatement programs, including adoption and enforcement of local anti-littering ordinances; beach cleanups; public information and education programs; and purchases of litter collection equipment such as receptacles, recycling bins, anti-litter signs and graffiti removal supplies.

This year, the DEP has awarded \$18.4 million in municipal grants and \$2.3 million in county grants. The total of \$20.7 million represents a \$1.3 million increase from last year due to an increase in revenues. The program is funded by a legislated user-fee on manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors that produce litter-generating products. Disbursements are based on housing units and miles of roadways within a municipality or county.

“Municipalities and counties are strongly encouraged to use these grants to pay for litter cleanups and supplies, badly-needed equipment purchases, enforcement activities and education,” said **Clean Communities Executive Director JoAnn Gemenden**. “We are grateful for funding that helps keep New Jersey clean. We are proud to serve as an educational resource for communities, as we drive many of our campaigns to engage the younger generations to help mold positive, long-term behaviors against discarding litter.”

Municipalities receiving at least \$100,000 this year are:

Newark, \$430,941; Jersey City, \$397,992; Toms River, \$223,521; Paterson, \$192,797; Hamilton (Mercer), \$189,554; Elizabeth, \$177,438; Edison, \$178,108; Woodbridge, \$175,036; Brick, \$169,773; Middletown, \$153,512; Franklin (Somerset), \$131,997; Cherry Hill, \$150,990; Monroe (Middlesex), \$94,060; Trenton, \$142,013; Clifton, \$138,044; Vineland, \$133,385; Berkeley, \$130,529; Camden, \$126,314; Gloucester Township, \$124,173; Old Bridge, \$119,697; Lakewood, \$119,795; Jackson, \$114,806; Howell, \$117,155; East Orange, \$110,384; Parsippany-Troy Hills, \$111,066; Manchester, \$110,261; Egg Harbor Township, \$104,183; and Bayonne, \$107,049, Wayne, \$107,384.

County grants were awarded as follows:

Atlantic, \$126,674; Bergen, \$150,409; Burlington, \$171,897; Camden, \$134,898; Cape May, \$71,946; Cumberland, \$183,538; Essex, \$72,938; Gloucester, \$140,808; Hudson, \$18,910; Hunterdon, \$82,518; Mercer, \$60,734; Middlesex, \$107,081; Monmouth, \$128,957; Morris, \$97,181; Ocean, \$209,457; Passaic, \$83,782; Salem, \$122,231; Somerset, \$84,476; Sussex, \$106,658; Union, \$59,594; Warren, \$88,998.

For a complete list of municipal and county grant awards, visit www.njclean.org

New Environmental Protections Against Single-Use Plastics

It can take a thousand years for a plastic bag to break down in the environment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that Americans use some 380 billion plastic bags and wraps each year. Only about five percent is recycled.

In a step protecting the environment from the harm of plastics pollution, last fall [Governor Phil Murphy signed a landmark law](#) effective May 4, 2022, protecting the environment and reducing litter by banning the sale or providing of plastic bags, regardless of thickness, at grocery stores and retail outlets, as well as paper bags at grocery stores measuring more than 2,500 square feet. The law also bans Styrofoam clamshell food containers. Starting October 4, 2021 plastic straws at restaurants will be available only upon request. Certain exemptions apply.

The nonprofit Clean Communities Council, a longtime DEP partner that oversees the implementation of municipal and county litter abatement programs funded by Clean Communities grants, will also play an important role as the state implements the new bag law. The group has launched a [Bag Up NJ](#) campaign, which urges consumers to use re-usable bags when they shop.

“The Clean Communities Council is pleased to partner with the NJDEP on a statewide outreach program to educate New Jerseyans about the need to bring their own bags to the store, as paper and plastic bags will not be provided to customers as of May 4, 2022,” said Gemenden. “This education campaign needs to be far-reaching and focused. Teamed with the NJDEP, we are now launching this aggressive campaign to be implemented over the next three years.”

New Jersey’s single-use plastics law is considered the most comprehensive in the nation. To help New Jersey businesses prepare, the New Jersey Business Action Center (NJBAC), part of the New Jersey Department of State, and the DEP have developed online resources. The state’s business-focused website [Business.NJ.gov](#) as well as the [DEP website](#) feature the latest information on the law.

Experts on complying with the law are available via NJBAC website’s Live Chat and at 1-800-Jersey-7. They are available 8 a.m. to 5p.m., Monday through Friday.

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