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How NJDOT is Working Toward a Cleaner New Jersey



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While some may think of New Jersey as more of an industrial state, I, along with many who live here, see it for its beauty and abundance of natural resources. It's called the **Garden State** for a reason!

While the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) is responsible for **building** and **maintaining** New Jersey's transportation infrastructure, we also have a responsibility to

maintain our great state's natural resources. I would like to share with you some initiatives and programs NJDOT oversees that benefit New Jersey's environment, which ultimately improves our **quality of life**—making New Jersey a better state.

In January 2020, Governor Murphy signed into law Senate Bill 2252, mandating that all state agencies convert at least 25% of their light duty vehicle fleet to electric vehicles no later than 2025. The full conversion of light duty fleets must be completed by 2035. The state's fleet has 5200 light duty vehicles, 350 of which are owned by NJDOT.

In order to have a coordinated approach with the statewide transportation agencies, NJDOT led an integrated agency effort to develop a statewide electric vehicle charging station network. NJDOT, NJ TRANSIT, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority and the South Jersey Transportation Authority joined forces with Princeton University's Operations Research & Financial Engineering Department to develop a strategic network for electric vehicle charging. The goal is a standardized network to be used by all four agencies.

A team of Princeton University graduate students were integral in designing the charging network to meet the



Pictured: NJDOT has on order 49 electric plug-in hybrid vehicles that are expected to be delivered late summer/early fall of this year.

2035 goals. NJDOT will be installing electric charging stations at our Ewing Headquarters first, and then at our regional headquarters in Mount Arlington and Cherry Hill. The network will then expand to other NJDOT facilities.

Combined, our state transportation agencies plan to convert approximately 386 light duty vehicles to electric vehicles by 2025 which will result in a reduction of about 2.5M pounds of carbon emissions per year in New Jersey. NJDOT has placed an order for its first 49 hybrid vehicles which is more than 50% of the 2025 goal. We expect the first delivery of those new light duty electric plug-in hybrid vehicles by late summer/early fall of this year.

That is a little bit in the future. What about taking care of the earth right now?

Continued on page 2



Continued from page 1

First, we are restarting the **Adopt-A-Highway** program which is one of NJDOT's most recognizable environmental initiatives. Adopt-A-Highway is a comprehensive, statewide, volunteer program created by the NJDOT and the **New Jersey Clean Communities Council** to encourage volunteers to clean and maintain state highways. Its mission is to reduce litter in an ongoing effort to enhance the appearance of New Jersey's landscape, protect the health and welfare of New Jersey residents, and promote a booming economy.



Volunteer groups are given a designated stretch of highway that has been determined to have minimal traffic and be safe for volunteers.

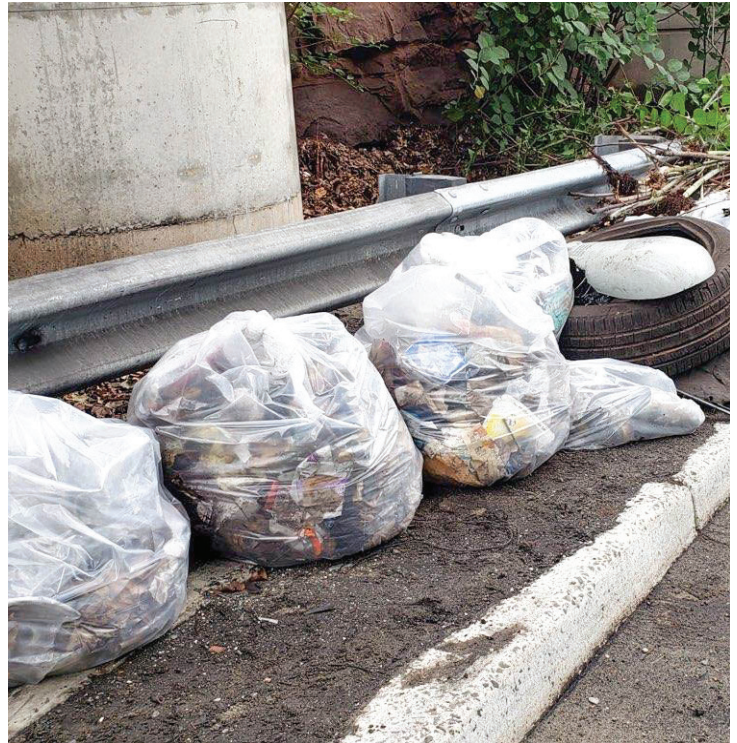
About four times a year, the volunteers go out onto the highway and clean up the litter. They leave the bags at a designated site where NJDOT crews pick them up and dispose of them. In turn, the NJDOT installs a sign acknowledging the volunteer's portion of the highway.

If your organization is interested in adopting a state highway, you can visit www.njclean.org to fill out an application or contact the Clean Communities Council at **609-989-5900** or njccc@njclean.org.

Next, we are also restarting the **Inmate Litter Program** which is another program that greatly benefits our state. NJDOT partners with the New Jersey Department of Corrections (DOC) who oversee carefully screened inmates to pick up litter along our Interstate highways and major state roads. These inmates, who volunteer for the program, perform a great service to our state and this program assists in their eventual integration back into society.

In past years, NJDOT crews and DOC inmates have collected as much as **10,500 tons of litter**. Not only does this make our state more beautiful, but the Inmate Litter Program allows our Highway Operations Crews to perform other maintenance work like filling potholes, sign maintenance and vegetation control.

Out of an abundance of caution, both the Adopt-a-Highway and Inmate Litter Programs were put on pause



Pictured: Inmates from the Department of Corrections picked up 85 bags of litter along Route 280 in East Orange as part of the Inmate Litter Program.

at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. After a year on hold, we are happy to resume these programs, while still adhering to CDC recommended COVID-19 guidelines.

As our statewide cleanup efforts increase, I would be remiss if I didn't remind everyone that if you see our staff, other state agencies, and individuals from one of these programs working on our state's highways, to **slow down** and **move over** to help keep them safe.

Unfortunately, litter is always a problem the State faces; but one that can be easily solved if folks choose to do the right thing and properly dispose of their trash in a designated receptacle.

This planet is the only one we have. Each one of us can do our part to make sure that future generations are able to enjoy all of the wonderful things it has to offer. While there's always room for improvement, small changes lead to larger ones, which lead to a better planet for us all.

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Commissioner