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Governor Proclaims July 1 *Don't Trash Arizona!* Day

PHOENIX (June 29, 2011) – In recognition of five years of litter education and prevention efforts to reduce litter on our state and regional highways, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer has proclaimed July 1, 2011, as *Don't Trash Arizona!* Day.

Don't Trash Arizona! was first launched in July 2006 utilizing funding from Proposition 400. It is a joint effort of the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) to increase public awareness of the economic, health, safety, and environmental impacts of roadside litter.

“It costs taxpayers more than \$3 million each year to pick up more than 1.5 million pounds of trash deposited by careless motorists along our regional freeway system,” said MAG Chair Tom Schoaf, mayor of Litchfield Park. “We also suffer economic impacts when tourists and prospective businesses choose not to come to our state due to a poor impression. With the investment in litter prevention and education, we hope to reduce these impacts in the future by convincing motorists to refrain from littering from their vehicles,” he said.

According to ADOT, 500 bags of trash are removed every weekday from Maricopa County freeways – equating to 150,000 taxpayer-funded labor hours each year. While 55 percent of roadside litter is deliberate, 45 percent is the result of items blowing or falling from vehicles.

“This is a serious safety issue for motorists and impacts Arizona’s ability to attract new businesses to boost our economy,” said ADOT Director John Halikowski. “When drivers swerve to avoid dangerous debris, it can result in serious crashes, or at a minimum cause significant traffic delays and congestion. One of our core messages in the *Don't Trash Arizona!* program is for drivers to take just a few minutes to properly secure their loads.”

In the formal proclamation, the Governor notes that freeway litter is ugly, unhealthy and unsafe. Litter can also impact the health of residents and the environment when toxic chemicals from plastics, dyes and cigarette butts leach into the water supply.

Research has found that more than 50 percent of Arizona residents are aware of the *Don't Trash Arizona!* slogan, while the number of respondents admitting to littering fell in 2010 to 23 percent, a 15 percent decline from when the program was implemented in 2006.

For more information about *Don't Trash Arizona!*, please visit the website at www.DontTrashAZ.com, or call Kelly Taft at (602) 452-5020.

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