

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kelly Taft
Communications Manager
(602) 452-5020
Or Veronica Graves
Olson Communications
(480) 368-7999

Biodegradable Trash is Still Litter

New Don't Trash Arizona Anti-Litter Campaign Urges Motorists to Clean Up their Act

PHOENIX (May 24, 2012) — When in doubt, don't throw it out. Even litter that's considered "biodegradable" can take years to decompose, according to the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), which recently launched the "*No Cups, Cans or Butts – Don't Trash Arizona*" initiative.

"Many individuals mistakenly believe it's okay to throw biodegradable items, like apple cores or banana peels, on the ground because they're 'natural,'" said Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman, MAG chair. "It's true that those items may eventually decompose, but in the meantime, other problems arise from this type of litter."

Litter attracts more litter, prompting others to toss trash that is not biodegradable in the same area. Food and other organic material can also attract rodents or other wildlife, such as javelinas and coyotes. When the litter is along the highway, this can pose a risk to both motorists and wildlife.

A recent MAG survey of Arizona residents indicates 41 percent of admitted litterers report having thrown food or organic material on the ground in the past year. In fact, organic material was one of the most common types of trash tossed.

As in prior years, of the residents who indicated they had littered in the last year, nearly half said they were most likely to litter while they were driving or riding in a vehicle.

Don't Trash Arizona is working to inform Valley motorists that all litter – even if it's biodegradable – is ugly, unhealthy and unsafe. Residents are encouraged to visit the website at www.DontTrashArizona.com and sign up to receive a free, reusable and recyclable trash bag to keep in their vehicles.

"That way, the next time they're munching on an apple or peeling a banana, they'll have a clean and safe way to discard their trash and help keep our surrounding areas trash-free," said Hallman.

For more information, please contact Kelly Taft, (602) 452-5020 (cell: 602-615-2086) or Veronica Graves, (480) 368-7999 (cell: 520-234-2111).

About *Don't Trash Arizona*

Don't Trash Arizona is a joint effort between the Maricopa Association of Governments and the Arizona Department of Transportation to address the economic, safety, and health impacts of freeway litter along regional and state highways. The program is funded through Proposition 400, which was approved by voters in 2004. That funding encompasses litter pickup, sweeping, and landscape maintenance, as well as litter education and prevention. *Don't Trash Arizona* seeks to change attitudes, awareness, and most importantly, behavior, when it comes to roadway littering.

###