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### **Plan Trash-Free Road Trip This Summer**

#### ***Don't Trash Arizona* Anti-Litter Campaign Offers Tips for Keeping Highways Clean**

**PHOENIX (June 20, 2012)** — Summer is the season when the wide open highway calls to many Arizonans, beckoning them to a road trip adventure. It's also when the state's roadways take an extra beating from the paper litter, cigarette butts and blown-out tire treads that can accumulate when motorists don't take time to plan ahead, according to the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), the organization behind the powerful "*No Cups, Cans or Butts – Don't Trash Arizona*" initiative.

This summer, drivers can ensure a safe and litter-free road trip by following some advance-planning strategies:

- Carry extra plastic bags (recycled grocery shopping bags) in the car for use when discarding trash, or visit [www.DontTrashArizona.com](http://www.DontTrashArizona.com) to receive a free, reusable, recyclable trash bag to keep in your vehicle. Although research finds that about 60 percent of litter is intentional, typically occurring in places where debris has already accumulated, it's important to note that ALL litter is preventable. Littering—whether accidental or intentional—is a class three misdemeanor, punishable by up to \$500 in fines.
- Keep a portable ashtray in the car for getting rid of cigarette butts. For newer vehicles that don't have an ashtray, drivers can use an empty soda can instead. By discarding cigarette butts properly, drivers help keep the roadway clean, prevent toxic chemicals from contaminating the water system, and help reduce the incidence of wildfires started from sparks igniting dry brush that is commonly found along desert highways.
- Properly maintain vehicle tires. The summer heat wreaks havoc on rubber, causing it to dry out and crack. To help avoid a tire blowout, drivers should examine the tread. [AAA Arizona](#) recommends checking tire tread by placing a quarter upside down in the tread grooves on several spots on the tire. If the top of Washington's head is exposed at any point, it's time to replace that tire. Blowouts can cause serious traffic accidents. Tire tread along Arizona highways also greatly contributes to roadway debris, creating a safety hazard for other motorists.

"We're asking summer travelers to recognize litter is ugly, unhealthy, and unsafe," said Tempe Mayor and MAG Chair Hugh Hallman. "Motorists who toss or lose trash on the roadway contribute to the 1.6 million pounds of litter that must be removed from Valley freeways each year. A little advanced planning is all it takes to help put trash in its proper place."

#### **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.