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

Monsoon Caution: Beware of Roadway Litter

PHOENIX (June 25, 2014) Monsoon storms may bring welcome rain, but strong winds can also whip up trash and other debris along our Valley roadways. Not only is litter unsightly, it also can be dangerous. Roadway debris is responsible for 25,000 accidents nationwide every year, and there are an average 100 crashes each year on regional freeways involving thrown or fallen objects. The Maricopa Association of Governments' (MAG) *Don't Trash Arizona* campaign urges Valley drivers to take steps to ensure that the roads are safe and free of unnecessary litter during the monsoon.

"Monsoon storms make driving conditions dangerous enough on their own, without the added hazards of trash and debris from drivers blowing into the roadway," said MAG Chair Michael LeVault, mayor of Youngtown. "Drivers must act responsibly and dispose of trash properly at all times."

Don't Trash Arizona makes it easy for motorists to avoid littering and the hazards caused by littering by providing free litterbags and helpful tips on how to keep Arizona beautiful and safe, at this time of year and always:

- **Use litterbags:** Be prepared and have a litterbag handy while on the road. *Don't Trash Arizona* will send a free litterbag to Arizona residents who request one through the [website](#). Keep a second bag for recyclable items such as paper and plastic.
- **Secure your load:** Do not toss trash and other objects into truck beds as they will fly out while driving. An estimated 40 percent of litter comes from trucks and unsecured loads. Secure loads with straps, ropes and bungee cords or cover the entire bed with a tarp or net.
- **Put it out, inside:** Use a portable ashtray in order to store cigarette butts until they can be properly disposed of in a trash can.
- **Become a [campaign advocate](#):** Print *Don't Trash Arizona* stickers, posters and more from the website. Businesses can also show support by hosting banner ads on their websites, which are also available online at www.DontTrashArizona.com.

Littering by the numbers:

- Every weekday, ADOT crews pick up more than 500 bags of trash from our regional freeways. That's about 150,000 bags each year and 1.6 million pounds of trash.
- \$3 million in annual taxpayer dollars are spent for the 150,000 hours of labor it takes to pick up trash just along our regional freeways.
- Cigarette butts represent more than one-third of all freeway litter. They can take years to decompose and the toxic chemicals in them can leach into the water supply.

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. Visit www.DontTrashArizona.com.