



**For Immediate Release:**  
May 3, 2021

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## **NJDOT Inmate Litter and Adopt-A-Highway programs begin as spring cleaning continues across the state Annual statewide road beautification is in full swing**

**(Trenton)** - New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti today announced the resumption of the Inmate Litter and Adopt-A-Highway programs to complement the efforts of the NJDOT highway operations crews, as the annual statewide litter removal campaign to beautify New Jersey's highways continues.

"After a harsh winter and a busy pothole repair campaign, the Department is focused on collecting litter, removing graffiti, pruning trees, and mowing grass to beautify the 2,300 miles of State highways," Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti said. "Beginning today, NJDOT's efforts will be bolstered by the resumption of the Inmate Litter and Adopt-A-Highway programs that help keep the shoulders, medians, and ramps clean and litter free."

NJDOT crews began to focus on beautification efforts such as litter and graffiti removal in April after a busy pothole repair campaign that began in March. Pothole repair is ongoing, while we continue to prioritize litter cleanup.

The Inmate Litter and the Adopt-A-Highway programs, which are beginning today, augment the work of our Highway Operations Crews. This allows NJDOT staff to perform other necessary work, including sign maintenance, vegetation control, continued pothole repair, as well as litter and graffiti removal. The Inmate Litter and the Adopt-A-Highway programs were put on hold at the beginning of 2020 due to the pandemic. We are now resuming these programs while adhering to CDC recommended COVID-19 guidelines.

NJDOT crews employ a tactic that focuses multiple maintenance functions on targeted corridors, so within days the location is transformed. This effort includes litter and graffiti removal. Since 2018, the Department has removed more than 76,500 square yards of graffiti along state highways.

Everyone has a role to play in keeping New Jersey beautiful by putting litter in its proper place. The Department encourages motorists to keep your trash in your car until you can dispose of it properly in a recycle bin or garbage can at your destination.

With litter crews out in full force, we want to remind drivers of [New Jersey's Move Over law](#) that requires motorists to move over if it is safe to do so when they approach an emergency or service vehicle stopped on the side of the road. If you cannot safely MOVE OVER, PLEASE SLOW DOWN.

### **About the Adopt-A-Highway Program**

The Adopt-A-Highway program 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. These 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 and clean up the litter. They leave bags where NJDOT crews pick them up and dispose of them. In turn, NJDOT installs a sign acknowledging the volunteer group's portion of the highway.

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

### **About the Inmate Litter Program**

For the past 10 years, NJDOT has been partnering with the New Jersey Department of Corrections (DOC), which oversees carefully screened inmates to pick up litter along our Interstate highways and major State roads. In addition, they may trim vegetation near guiderail and signposts. In past years, NJDOT crews and DOC inmates have collected as much as 10,500 tons of litter.

This year there are 12 crews with approximately six members each that are working across the State. The litter details are accompanied by guards and work independently from the NJDOT crews. NJDOT provides safety training to the DOC personnel, who in turn train the guards and inmates. These inmates, who volunteer for the program, perform a great service to our State and get the opportunity to learn skills that may assist the participants when reentering the community.

To report a roadway maintenance issue on a state highway, motorists can call 1-800-POTHOLE or click on the Highway Maintenance Reporting button on the NJDOT homepage at <https://www.njdotproblemreporting.com/>.

Motorists are encouraged to check NJDOT's traffic information website [www.511nj.org](http://www.511nj.org) for real-time travel information and for NJDOT news follow us on Twitter [@NewJerseyDOT](https://twitter.com/NewJerseyDOT) or on the [NJDOT Facebook page](#).

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