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Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions Honored with NJCCC’s “Rise to the Challenge” Award

ANJEC Provides Virtual Training for Local Environmental Commissions on Ways to Dispose of PPE and other Plastic Litter

TRENTON – November XX, 2020 – For the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC), the pandemic isn’t the only crisis on its mind. The fight against PPE-related litter is just as paramount.

Due to the many unknowns caused by this pandemic and with an increase in PPE litter across the state, ANJEC has provided important virtual training for New Jersey Clean Communities coordinators, offering education credits.

That is why the New Jersey Clean Communities Council (NJCCC) is awarding ANJEC with its “Rise to the Challenge Awards,” given this year to organizations that stepped up to help greatly limit the spread of COVID-19 litter.

“While we all navigated the new normal that came with the pandemic, we just couldn’t put this fight against litter on the backburner,” said ANJEC Executive Director Jennifer Coffey. “The pandemic provided challenges to plastic pollution as it did with many other things. Yet we were still able to move forward – even in crisis.”

ANJEC is a 51-year-old nonprofit working to educate, empower and mobilize state environmental commissions, green teams and other municipal officials to protect the environment at the local level.

“Through its webinars, social media campaigns and other educational efforts, ANJEC has made a major impact in helping communities reduce PPE little and single-use plastics,” said NJCCC Executive Director Sandy Huber.

In early spring, as state environmental leaders noted a stark increase in residents using outdoor spaces, ANJEC made a presentation with Liz Sweedy, Morris County Clean Communities Coordinator. The webinar was titled: “Single-Use Plastics Impact on the Habitat & Waterways.”

In August, the organization offered clean communities credit hours for another workshop: “Single-Use Plastics & The Pandemic.”

ANJEC’s online training courses have been watched by more than 400 people, with the number of viewers growing each day. Each webinar is recorded, posted on the organization’s YouTube channel and is free to view.

Equal access to the proper education is key to the fight against plastic pollution, according to Coffey.

Coffey applauded state officials for also not giving up the fight against plastic litter as legislation was signed Nov. 4 prohibiting single-use plastic and paper bags and plastic foam containers. The ban, which goes into effect in May 2022, prohibits the type of bags customers get from restaurants that do takeout and from groceries and other stores.

“This is a phenomenal step in tackling plastic litter in a systematic way but it’s not the only step,” Coffey said, adding that over the next year, the ANJEC will be hyper-focused on the implementation of this new law.

Learn more about the NJCCC at NJClean.org.

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