



# LOUISIANA **LITTER RESEARCH**

AUGUST 2023

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## RESEARCH EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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## OVERVIEW



Louisiana is known as the “sportsman’s paradise” for its natural beauty. Yet, litter blights our roadways, bayous, rural towns, and urban centers, impacting the state’s natural environment, quality of life, and economic development. Reducing litter is critical to a healthier, more prosperous Louisiana. This requires a comprehensive understanding of the litter issue and the identification of the best strategies, initiatives, and methods to address littering behavior.

In June 2022, the Governor’s Task Force on Litter Abatement and Beautification published a report outlining recommendations and key priorities to address the state’s litter challenge. One of the recommendations was to conduct comprehensive litter research in order to understand and address the problem. Thanks to funding from the Louisiana State Legislature and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor,

Keep Louisiana Beautiful (KLB) oversaw the state’s first litter research in over a decade. The research consists of three parts — the **Roadway Litter Survey**, the **Public Attitudes Survey**, and the **Litter Cost Study** — and was conducted by a Project Team led by Carson Consulting. That team consisted of Tetra Tech BAS, Steve Stein, and numerous individuals with an extensive history of conducting national, state, and local research studies. This document includes results of the Roadway Litter Survey to estimate the composition of littered items along roadways; the Public Attitude Survey to gauge Louisiana residents’ attitudes about litter, litter abatement, enforcement, and awareness; and the Litter Cost Study to estimate the overall costs associated with litter and illegal dumping removal, disposal, enforcement, and education. The results also establish a baseline for measuring the litter problem and will aid in developing policies, awareness campaigns, and prevention programs for litter abatement.

## RESEARCH KEY FINDINGS

Below are the key findings specific to each study. When applicable, the results from the studies may be compared to offer insight or provide documentation as to where another study supports differs from a finding.

### ROADWAY LITTER SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

- There are approximately 143.8 million pieces of litter on Louisiana roadways.

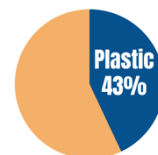
**143.8**  
**MILLION**  
**PIECES OF LITTER**

- Interstates are the most littered type of roadway, with an average of 10,178 pieces of litter per mile.



- The most common Aggregate Litter (Visible + Micro) categories are tobacco products (24.5%), beverage containers (13.7%), and construction debris (10.8%).

- The highest percentage of Aggregate Litter by packaging material is plastic (43.1%), followed by tobacco-related other (24.5%) and metal (10%).



- The most common Aggregate Litter items are cigarette butts (21%), plastic beverage containers and cup pieces (13.8%), and plastic fast-food pieces (7.2%).



## PUBLIC ATTITUDE SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

- Most Louisiana citizens, 92 percent, believe that litter is a problem.

**92%**  
**BELIEVE**  
**LITTER IS A**  
**PROBLEM**

- Litter negatively impacts communities. 88 percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that litter harms humans and animals, affects environmental quality, contributes to flooding, reduces property values, negatively impacts tourism, and decreases business revenues.



- Littering is frequently observed. 38 percent of respondents reported that they witness littering behavior weekly, and 44 percent reported seeing it several times a month.

- The top reasons people litter are convenience and laziness. 29 percent of respondents believe most people litter because it is more convenient to litter than to dispose of trash properly.
- More enforcement of litter laws and illegal dumping is supported. 67.6 percent support more enforcement.
- 68 percent support an additional fee to fund local litter cleanup and prevention.



## LITTER COST STUDY KEY FINDINGS

- An estimated \$91,409,573 was spent in 2022 by local governments and state agencies on cleanup, prevention, and remediation efforts related to litter and illegal dumping across Louisiana, which is a cost increase of 65 percent since 2010 after adjustment for inflation.
- The LADOTD pays \$13 million a year for litter abatement costs, more than any other state agency.
- Municipalities, cities, and towns bear the highest percentage of litter costs (36.4%).

 **65%**  
**IN COST**  
**SINCE 2010**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION



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