



For Immediate Release
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SEVEN MILLION POUNDS OF FARM TIRES COLLECTED TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Farm Tire Drop-off events collect large agricultural tires; improperly disposed of tires create risk of fire and air pollution, spread of disease

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) and Maryland Environmental Service (MES) announced today that 7,662,000 pounds of agricultural tires, including car tires and large tractor and truck tires, were collected and disposed during Farm Tire Drop-Off events between February and April of 2014. The weight of the farm agriculture tires collected is equivalent to more than 380,000 car tires.

In October 2013, the Maryland Board of Public Works approved \$1.5 million in Maryland Used Tire Cleanup and Recycling Fund (“Tire Fund”) monies to be used for the collection of agricultural tires. This fund is supported by an 80 cent per tire fee on the purchase of every new tire in the State. Through MDE’s funding, MES worked with counties and the Maryland Farm Bureau to collect and properly dispose agricultural scrap tires.

The counties that were served by the Farm Tire Drop-Off events were Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Garrett, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George’s, Queen Anne’s, St. Mary’s, Talbot, Washington, and Wicomico. The events are documented on [this video](#).

“In the past, county-wide citizen drop-off events limited the number of tires a farmer could recycle,” said Chuck Fry, Maryland Farm Bureau President. “We think it is important to provide a way for farmers to recycle all of the old tires on their farms – big tractor tires as well as passenger or truck tires – that have accumulated over the years.”

“The farming community expressed an interest in some assistance from the Department in properly managing old tires from their properties. We are pleased by the response of the farming community and the success in collecting so many tires so quickly,” said MDE Secretary Robert M. Summers. “We hope we can fund additional events for the farmers.”

The collection activities were intended to be “farmer-friendly.” The tires did not have to be cut or cleaned before delivery, as many tire processors require, and there was no limit on the number or

types of tires a farmer could bring, as is often the case with citizen drop-off events. Some county Farm Bureaus targeted dairy farmers who had thousands of tires left over from trench silos, which are trenches dug into the ground, sometimes lined with concrete, for making and storing silage used as animal feed. The tire collection events saved many farmers hundreds of dollars in disposal fees, which can range anywhere from \$5 for smaller tires up to over \$300 for large tractor or equipment tires.

The Walkersville event in Frederick County, hosted by Susie Knapp Ramsburg and her husband, James Ramsburg, topped all other participants with 769 tons of agriculture tires collected.

“Farmers are very grateful,” said Susie Knapp Ramsburg. “Some said they were digging out tires that had been buried. Maryland farmers appreciated the timing: before crops, snakes, bees, and weeds. After hauling tires for two days, one farmer was downright jubilant with the removal of all their tires. Some farms had tires that were fifty years old. I have never seen so many people so happy to say goodbye to something.”

Since its inception in 1994, Maryland’s Scrap Tire Program has recovered more than 10 million old tires from illegal stockpiles and collected hundreds of thousands more at free citizen drop-off events. The funding for these events comes from Maryland’s Used Tire Cleanup and Recycling Fund.

When improperly disposed, scrap tires can create risks to the environment and public health through the potential for fire and by providing habitat for such disease-carrying pests as mosquitoes and rodents. According to the EPA, a burning tire breaks down into hazardous compounds, including gases, heavy metals, and oil – an average of two gallons of oil can be generated from one burning tire. Air emissions from a burning tire may include polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), benzene, styrene, phenols, and butadiene.

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About the Maryland Department of the Environment

MDE’s mission is to protect and restore the quality of Maryland’s air, water and land resources, while fostering smart growth, a thriving and sustainable economy and healthy communities. For more information about MDE’s Scrap Tire Program, call 410- 537-3314 or visit <http://www.mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/recyclingandoperationsprogram/scraptire/pages/programs/landprograms/recycling/scraptire/index.aspx>.

About Maryland Farm Bureau

The mission of the Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) is to promote and protect Maryland agriculture and rural life. MFB is a private, non-profit membership organization that is financed

by voluntary membership dues. Its strength comes from the active participation of over 36,000 member families that belong to the state's 23 county Farm Bureaus.

About Maryland Environmental Service

Maryland Environmental Service is an independent State agency that provides operational and technical services to protect and enhance the environment for the benefit of the people of Maryland.