



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
800 BAY ROAD
P.O. Box 778
DOVER, DELAWARE 19903

JENNIFER COHAN
SECRETARY

June 26, 2018

Dear Members of the League of Local Governments:

With the upcoming summer and autumn celebrations soon upon us, and warm weather activities already well underway, we write to enlist your support for an initiative of growing concern. As members of the Anti-Dumping/Anti-Littering Task Force, established in 2017 by the General Assembly, we have been delving into issues and potential solutions to solve the growing problem of litter in Delaware.

One type of litter which local governments might have a special perspective on, and ability to help address in relatively simple fashion, is that of balloon pollution. Although they may be pretty when they float up, nevertheless, released balloons are a form of litter, as what goes up must come down. An average of 1,000 balloons are found on Delaware's beaches during the three-hour Coastal Cleanup in September of each year. Forty-seven balloons were found in just one clean up along our southern beaches following Mother's Day this year.

Balloons and their ribbons:

- blight our landscapes and beaches;
- entangle and are ingested by birds and marine animals causing injury and death; and
- have been documented causing power outages.

According to the Marine Education, Research and Rehabilitation Institute (MERR) based in Lewes, when animals ingest balloons mistaken for food, the non-digestible material impacts their stomach and esophagus, causing slow and gruesome starvation, as the animal can no longer digest actual food. Sea turtles are most commonly affected, making up 58% of the animals that are fatally impacted by balloon ingestion. Delaware enjoys four different species of sea turtles in its waters from May through November. Two of these species are endangered, making it all the more imperative to protect their habitat from the unnecessary deadly presence of balloons.

Although balloons already do fall under Delaware's littering law, we are reaching out to all local governments in Delaware to enlist their assistance in addressing this problem by adding



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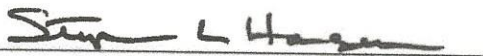
the following clause or something similar to any policies and guidelines provided to festival or parade organizers and participants (print and online):

Our town welcomes you and hopes you have a wonderful time celebrating our event. In order to keep our town and surrounding areas beautiful and reduce the accumulation of litter and its impact on our environment, we are asking that you refrain from distributing or releasing balloons at our event.

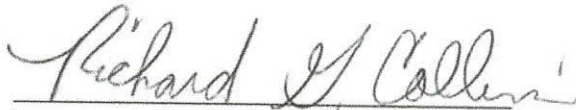
Local governments of coastal communities are also encouraged to add this clause to any beach rules which they distribute or post online. We hope that this simple measure will be a good start to reducing the number of fugitive balloons, and lessen the detrimental impact in our communities and environment.

Please contact us if you would like more information on this initiative or on the overall work of the Anti-Littering/Anti-Dumping Task Force. Our final report with other initiatives is anticipated to be completed by September.

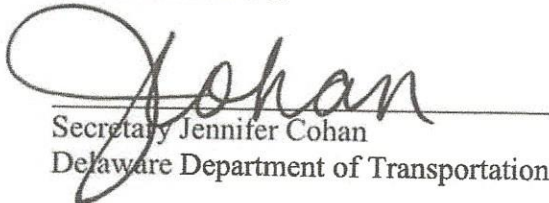
With our very sincerest thanks for your leadership on this issue.



Senator Stephanie Hansen
Senate District #10



Representative Richard Collins
House District #41



Secretary Jennifer Cohan
Delaware Department of Transportation



Dee Durham
Co-Chair, Plastic Free Delaware
www.plasticfreedelaware.org
302-981-1950