



## MESSAGE FROM MARSHA

### **WASTE TIRE PROGRAM IN NEED OF OVERHAUL**

Did you know every consumer in Colorado that purchases a new automobile or truck tire is required to pay the State of Colorado a *\$7.50* waste tire fee for the purpose of recycling their used tire? According to the Colorado Legislative Council Staff, Colorado State Government will collect over \$5 million dollars from consumers to recycle waste tires in the upcoming years. The waste tire program has been in existence for 20 years, with the intent to clean up illegal tire dumps and create markets for waste tires. Over the years the waste tire program has been under assault by special interest groups such as higher education and general recycling to fund their programs. As a result, Colorado has the worst record in the nation in recycling waste tires and managing the threat waste tires pose to life, property and the environment.

Due to poor policy decisions, lack of enforcement and several fraudulent waste tire operators, Colorado is home to our nation's largest stock piles of waste tires. According to the Rubber Manufacturers Association, Colorado has nearly 50 million waste tires that have been REPORTED! Based upon interviews with haulers, property owners and individuals working in the industry there is possibly another 50 millions tires in dumps that have been UNREPORTED! Over 100 million waste tires littering the environment and posing threats at a catastrophic level are scattered throughout Colorado and in our communities.

Consider an average automobile tires contain over 8 quarts of oil, once ignited become a hazardous waste and very difficult to extinguish. According to the 1998 FEMA Report to Congress, tire fires present a unique set of risks to firefighters. Exposure to toxic substances, personal protection requirements, fire durations and site hazards encountered at tire fires all contribute to risk of life, property and the environment. An example is the Tracey Fire in California, where 7 million tires burned for two years resulting in the death of firefighters, major environmental and property destruction. Throughout El Paso, Freemont, Pueblo, Weld, Morgan and Mesa County, millions of tires litter the landscape. The citizens living around those tire dumps deserve to be protected from catastrophic fires that may erupt from these waste tires. Channel 7 in Denver followed the story and reported the problems correctly, to view the report go to <http://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/21154774/detail.html>.

What a shame! More than \$1.6 million dollars from the waste tire fund goes to programs such as Higher Education, Dixie Cup and Pop Can Recycling instead of recycling waste tires. This is another example of taxpayers paying for a program that is funding completely different programs than the intended purpose! Over the next couple of months I will be highlighting the flaws in the current program and sponsoring legislation that that will transfer money into enforcement, fire and risk management and charge stiffer penalties on haulers, property owners and waste tire companies who break the law! These changes in the waste tire program are necessary to protect lives, our communities and the environment. For additional information please contact me [marshalooper@gmail.com](mailto:marshalooper@gmail.com) or 719-238-5600. Please us for a town hall meeting scheduled on 10/17/9 from 9:00-10:00 at the Fountain Senior Citizen Center located at 5745 Southmoor Drive in Fountain.

*Marsha Looper*

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