**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Clean Up Act On Litter, experts tell Premier**

TORONTO (April 2, 2024) The Ontario Day of Action on Litter lacks action, and that needs to change, say two litter prevention experts who were invited by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) staff to assess the program in 2020.

Established by Conservative government legislation in 2019, the Day of Action on Litter campaign is “the Ford government’s best kept secret,” said Sheila White, of [www.litterpreventionprogram.com](http://www.litterpreventionprogram.com/).

“There's nothing behind it. No energy, no support, no marketing, no metrics,” said Pat Barrett, a retired City of Toronto litter reduction and solid waste communications expert.

White and Barrett met quarterly in 2020 with ministry officials to discuss and evaluate the program.

 “We want real action on litter, and we’re not seeing it,” said White at their press conference held today at Queen’s Park with support from well-known environmentalist Mary-Margaret McMahon, the MPP for Beaches-East York.

Barrett and White, who between them have more than 50 years of experience in litter-related issues, described their ideas and concerns about the five-year-old Day of Action on Litter. They see littering as a concerning and costly, province-wide social problem that demands better from a government that claims in its bill that “reducing litter is a priority in Ontario.”

 “Allowing enough time to create awareness is vital. Promotion needs to start well in advance of the event,” said Barrett. “The MECP ‘Act of Litter’ webpage content and visuals focus on waste management, not on fighting litter.” <www.ontario.ca/page/act-on-litter>

 “The extent of Ontario’s problem with littering is massive,” said White. “The Ford government’s response is meek. We’re here not only to publicize the upcoming Day of Action on Litter on Tuesday, May 14 because the government isn’t getting the message out. We’re also here to stimulate action. We need concerted education and prevention tactics.”

Among their common-sense slate of 18 doable actions for Premier Doug Ford and MPP Andrea Khanjin, the minister responsible for the environment:

* advertise the Day of Action on Litter properly and budget for it;
* have a dedicated, permanent Officer with authority to steer the government’s commitment to make littering a priority in the province;
* strike a special legislative committee on litter, welcoming all parties and public submissions on solving Ontario’s unacceptably high rate of littering;
* hold a Premier’s Litter Summit involving producers and industry groups in litter prevention and funding solutions for municipalities - tobacco, beverage, restaurant chains, plastics and packaging, snack and confectionery, the construction industry, for example;
* communicate to the public the importance of binning waste so that corporate producers pay.

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