



TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission
on Intergovernmental Relations



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission Members

FROM: Cliff Lippard *Cliff*
Executive Director

DATE: 6 September 2019

SUBJECT: Senate Joint Resolution 344 (Illegal Tire Dumping)—Panel

In March 2019, Senator Steven Dickerson introduced Joint Resolution 344, which directed the Commission to study the overall effects of illegal waste tire dumps in Tennessee. When the General Assembly adjourned without voting on the legislation, Senator Dickerson sent a letter formally requesting that TACIR take up the study, which the Commission voted to do at its May 2019 meeting.

Although the bill sponsor and others interviewed by staff describe illegal tire dumping as a significant concern across the state, it is unclear how widespread the problem may be. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), which administers the state's waste tire program, has responded to more than 700 complaints of illegal tire dumping in the past decade. TDEC staff stated that, when tires are dumped illegally, it is difficult and costly to clean up. However, the United States Environmental Protection Agency staff stated that nationally the problem of illegal tire dumping has been reduced to a small nuisance issue.

When a new tire is sold, an old tire must be disposed of, but waste tires are prohibited from landfills. Instead, unwanted tires are collected and processed for beneficial end uses—recycled into other products or used as an industrial fuel source. To discourage illegal dumping, each county is required to provide a collection site for waste tires. To help cover the costs of collecting and processing waste tires, tire retailers collect a \$1.35 pre-disposal fee on each new replacement tire sold, keeping \$0.10 to offset their own administrative costs and as an incentive to remit the fees to the state on time. Twenty-five cents from each tire sold goes into the state's Solid Waste Management Fund—from

which TDEC can provide grants to local governments and solid waste authorities for recycling upgrades and cleanup of illegal tire dumpsites, among other things. The remaining \$1.00 per tire returns to the county where the tire was sold to support the county's collection program. Last year, Tennessee's counties (and the tire retailers within) reported processing about 5.8 million waste tires for beneficial end uses.

Tennessee also levies a \$5 Tire Environmental Fee on new vehicle sales, which goes into a separate Tire Environmental Fund, managed by TDEC's Office of Sustainable Practices. This fund provides matching grants to local government, nonprofit, and for-profit entities for tire recycling projects, facility improvements, projects that use recycled tire products, and for research, testing, or development of beneficial end-market uses for waste tires.

Today the Commission will hear from a panel of experts with knowledge of waste management, scrap tire recycling, and public health risks associated with discarded tires:

- Dewey G. Grantham Jr., Regional Vice President, Liberty Tire Recycling
- Jeremy Hooper, Environmental Consultant, TDEC Division of Solid Waste Management
- Abelardo C. Moncayo, PhD, Director of the Vector-Borne Diseases Program, Tennessee Department of Health, Division of Communicable and Environmental Diseases and Emergency Preparedness
- Mike Stooksberry, Solid Waste Consultant, University of Tennessee County Technical Assistance Service