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## **Keep America Beautiful Releases National Report Addressing Community Impacts of Blighted Properties**

### ***National Literature Review, "Charting the Multiple Meanings of Blight," is First Phase of New Long-term Initiative to Study, Measure and Combat Blight in Communities***

**STAMFORD, Conn. (May 19, 2015)** – Keep America Beautiful, the leading national nonprofit that envisions a country where every community is a clean, green and beautiful place to live, today announced the release of "Charting the Multiple Meanings of Blight: A National Literature Review on Addressing the Community Impacts of Blighted Properties." The report provides a contemporary snapshot of how researchers, experts and practitioners describe and understand the complex conditions that create blight and the many policy responses that communities are taking.

Prepared by researchers through the Vacant Properties Research Network (VPRN), a project of the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech, in collaboration with Econsult Solutions Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm, the national report examines more than 300 academic articles as well as special policy and practitioner reports devoted to the concept of blight.

"The term 'blight' continues to evolve as communities confront different types of blighted properties from littered and vacant lots to foreclosed and abandoned homes," said Jennifer Jehn, president and CEO, Keep America Beautiful. "This research will contribute significantly to the understanding of blight, a critical environmental, economic and social issue Keep America Beautiful and our affiliates are strongly positioned to help address in urban, suburban and rural communities nationwide.

"The report will have an even broader impact because it will help us shape the development of measurement tools that will let us better assess and then prepare strategies to combat blight in all its forms at the community level," concluded Jehn.

The primary authors outlined: 1) what recent articles and reports say about blight; 2) how policymakers and community-based organizations can leverage the report's findings; and 3) how Keep America Beautiful and its network of community-based affiliates can build on this report to develop a blight cost calculator for community groups and local governments. The report concludes with 10 overarching recommendations for policymakers, future research, and potential actions by Keep America Beautiful and its affiliates.

"Blight is a complex legal and policy concept with a long history," observed Metropolitan Institute Senior Fellow Joe Schilling, a report co-author. "This pioneering synthesis of the literature will help local officials and community-based organizations, such as Keep America Beautiful and its affiliates, fashion more holistic strategies to address the community impacts of blighted properties and facilitate neighborhood revitalization."

