

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 5, 2026

Township of Lawrence

County of Mercer

Lawrence Township Responds to Report of Illegal Dumping at Private Commercial Property

Lawrence Township officials are responding to reports of illegal dumping at a privately owned commercial property that includes a creek area within the Township.

The Township first received a report about the property's (a portion of land between a parking lot area and the creek at the Lawrence Shopping Center, adjacent to the Burlington store) condition via email from a concerned resident on March 2, 2026. The complaint was acknowledged the same day, and both the Township's Health Department and Police Department were assigned to investigate the matter.

The conditions described by the resident in the initial email - and later reiterated during public comment at the March 3, 2026, Lawrence Township Council meeting - were subsequently confirmed by Township officials. The investigation determined that the debris present at the site resulted from illegal dumping from multiple sources, including household refuse, commercial waste, and deer carcasses that appeared to have been field-dressed at another location and then improperly disposed of at the site.

Upon confirmation of the situation, Township officials promptly notified the commercial property owner. The owner responded by dispatching a cleaning crew to the site to assess conditions and begin initiating cleanup efforts. Township officials have confirmed that the property owner has committed to a sustained cleanup effort to remove the debris from the area between the parking lot and the creek.

The Township's Health Inspector has also filed a report with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). NJDEP is expected to assign a field investigator to review the site conditions and determine whether any additional environmental action is necessary.

In coordination with Township officials, the property owner has also agreed to implement several additional measures to prevent future dumping. These measures include working with the Township's Zoning Officer to pursue the installation of a fence along the parking lot boundary, as well as adding signage and potentially installing security cameras to deter illegal dumping activity in the area.

The Lawrence Township Police Department will also pay increased attention to the location during late-night hours to discourage loitering and potential dumping.

Township officials also learned that commercial vehicles were using the back portion of the parking lot as a staging area to respond to calls for service arising from the recent winter storm. The property owner has indicated that a request will be made to remove those vehicles from the site.

Throughout this process, Township officials have remained in regular communication with the resident who initially reported the concern, providing updates on the investigation and the actions being taken to address the issue.

In response to this matter, Mayor Christopher Bobbitt stated, *“Although the information that the resident shared with Township Council is distressing, I am proud of the rapid response of our professional Township staff as well as the willingness of the commercial property owner to work to address the issue of illegal dumping and protect our natural resources.”*

Lawrence Township appreciates the vigilance of residents who report potential environmental concerns and remains committed to working collaboratively with property owners and state agencies to address illegal dumping and protect the Township’s natural resources.

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