



**Office of the Metropolitan Council
Matt Watson
District 11**

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CONTACT:

Jonathan Tittlebaum, District 11 Legislative Aide, (225) 389-5169

\$500,000 FEDERAL GRANT AWARDED FOR PURCHASE OF A TIRE SHREDDER

BATON ROUGE – Today, Councilmembers Matt Watson and Tara Wicker proudly announced the procurement of a \$500,000 federal grant awarded to the East Baton Rouge Office Mosquito Abatement and Rodent Control to purchase an industrial tire shredder. This announcement furthers the two Councilmembers' long-standing partnership and commitment to fight against blight.

"This is great news for our city/parish. I am ecstatic to share this win with another parish leader who "GETS IT" in the fight against dumped tire blight in our community," said Councilman Matt Watson.

"The shredder demonstration I arranged back on May 17th, 2018 which showed how we could radically change how we handle waste tires and reduce hauling costs was met with almost universal excitement across city/parish workers, department heads, community volunteers and all who understand that our blight problem needs fresh, aggressive thinking to get past many years of indifference. Dr. Todd Walker gets it and is a great partner in the fight on blight and the danger it poses to our quality of life.

"Illegally dumped tires are more than an eyesore; they hold warm water and become breeding grounds for mosquitoes which are proven transmitters of West Nile Virus, Zika Virus and Denge. MARC has mapped 109 waste tire piles containing approximately 8000 tires, but we all know there are many more than that across our community. Currently, MARC must chemically treat these piles every 30 days to prevent continual mosquito breeding. A single tire can produce very large numbers of mosquitoes in a short period of time. In terms of disease prevention, shredding a single tire eliminates countless future mosquitoes and saves money by eliminating the need for future spraying."

"When Councilman Matt Watson brought a shredder to Baton Rouge for a demonstration in May, we realized that he too understood the problem waste tires pose not just as blight but a detriment to the safety of our community. We reached out to Councilman Watson and have coordinate our efforts to make the acquisition of a tire shredder a reality for the Parish," said Todd W. Walker, PhD., Director EBRP Mosquito Abatement and Rodent Control.

"When I met with Dr. Walker he gave me the history of his attempts to get a tire shredder. I appreciate his hard work and perseverance. I am so happy that he stayed on this so when these funds became available, we could get them and help our community," Councilman Matt Watson said.

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