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Dollar General Stores to Pay \$1.12 Million Settlement for Environmental Violations

Dollar General Stores throughout the State Improperly Handled and Disposed of Hazardous Waste

Santa Barbara District Attorney Joyce Dudley, together with 31 other California District Attorneys, announced today that Kern County Superior Court Judge Sidney P. Chapin has ordered the Tennessee based company Dolgen California, and its subsidiary corporations, that own and operate Dollar General Stores and a Distribution Center in California to pay \$1.125 Million as part of a civil settlement in an environmental prosecution.

The judgment is the result of an investigation into Dollar General retail stores and distribution centers throughout the state and their unlawful handling and storage of hazardous waste products over a five-year period. Those hazardous wastes and materials included automotive fluids, alkaline batteries, electronic waste, aerosol cans, expired over the counter medications, and other toxic, ignitable, and corrosive wastes.

Inspectors from district attorney offices and environmental regulators statewide, conducted a series of undercover inspections of waste bins originating at Dollar General retail stores and facilities. The inspections revealed that Dollar General retail stores and their distribution center had been routinely and systematically sending hazardous wastes to local landfills throughout California that were not permitted to receive those wastes. Regulators also found the documentation of employee hazardous waste training to be inaccurate or incomplete.

Dollar General was cooperative throughout the investigation and quickly responded to enhance its policies and procedures designed to eliminate the improper disposal of hazardous waste products in California. The Judgment requires hazardous waste be labeled, packaged and stored to minimize the risk of exposure to employees and customers. The proper handling of hazardous wastes also ensures that incompatible wastes do not combine to cause dangerous chemical reactions. Hazardous waste produced by California Dollar General retail stores, through damage, spills, and returns, is now being collected by state-registered haulers, taken to proper disposal facilities, and properly documented.

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“Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the District Attorneys and investigators throughout the state, businesses operating in California are well aware of their environmental responsibilities and our communities are better protected as a result,” said District Attorney Dudley.

Under the settlement, Dolgen California must pay \$500,000 in civil penalties and \$375,000 to reimburse the costs of the investigation. An additional \$112,000 will fund supplemental environmental projects furthering consumer protection and environmental enforcement in California. Dolgen will also fund hazardous waste minimization and enhanced compliance projects valued at \$138,000. The retailer will be bound under the terms of a permanent injunction prohibiting similar future violations of law.

There is one Dollar General Store in Santa Barbara County. Under the final judgment, Dolgen California will pay \$2200.00 in civil costs and penalties and cost recovery to the Santa Barbara County District Attorney’s Office.

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