



Riverside County District Attorney

# NEWS RELEASE

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## TARGET CORP ORDERED TO PAY \$22.5 MILLION SETTLEMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL VIOLATIONS

RIVERSIDE – Riverside County District Attorney Paul Zellerbach announced today, March 3, 2011, that a Northern California judge has ordered Minnesota-based Target Corporation to pay \$22.5 million as part of the settlement in a civil environmental prosecution.

Zellerbach joined in the announcement with the state Attorney General, 20 other county district attorneys statewide and city attorneys in San Diego and Los Angeles.

“This judgment holds Target, one of the largest chain stores in Riverside County, accountable for systematically ignoring laws just to cut costs,” Zellerbach said. “The terms of this injunction help ensure that the residents of Riverside County are protected from any further illegal dumping by Target of hazardous wastes into the environment.”

The judgment announced today is the culmination of a civil enforcement lawsuit filed in June 2009 in Alameda County alleging that more than 240 Target stores statewide improperly handled and disposed of hazardous wastes. The types of items dumped by Target included pesticides, herbicides, solvents, aerosols, batteries, degreasers, pool chemicals, and stain removers.

These chemical wastes can destroy landfill linings and leach down into the water table.

In Riverside County, some form of violation of unlawful handling and/or disposal of hazardous wastes was found at all 14 Target stores. During their investigation, Riverside County district attorney investigators determined that some Target stores in the county dumped hazardous wastes into Riverside County landfills, including highly flammable fireworks products.

California law (Title 22 of the state Code of Regulations and Chapter 6.5 of the state Health and Safety Code) requires companies to properly handle, store, and dispose of hazardous wastes to prevent harming people and the environment. That was not being done by Target stores which had not only violated or ignored the law, but the corporation also failed to diligently follow any hazardous wastes program to ensure employees were following the law. Instead, employees were simply throwing hazardous wastes into company compactors for disposal.

As a result of this civil prosecution, Target stores in California must now make sure that hazardous wastes are being properly accounted for, handled and disposed of to prevent illegal dumping in landfills. Those actions will help to ensure the safety of their employees, the public and the environment.

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A breakdown of the \$22.5 million settlement consists of \$17 million in civil penalties, \$3 million in costs, and \$2.5 million in supplemental environmental projects.

For Riverside County, the settlement includes payment of \$637,000 in civil penalties and \$40,000 in costs.

DA Zellerbach wishes to thank the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health and the county Waste Management Department for assisting the District Attorney's Special Prosecution Section in this case.

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