



San Diego City Attorney Jan I. Goldsmith

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 6, 2015

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99 Cents Only Stores to Pay \$2.3 Million To Settle Hazardous Waste Violations

Settling a statewide environmental-protection suit in which the San Diego City Attorney's Office played a lead role, 99 Cents Only Stores will pay \$2.3 million to settle allegations that its employees improperly stored, handled and disposed of hazardous and medical waste.

Under the terms of the stipulated judgment announced today, 99 Cents Only Stores has adopted new procedures under which hazardous waste is collected by state-registered haulers and taken to authorized disposal sites, rather than placed in trash bins and taken to local landfills not equipped to handle such wastes.

Six of the retail chain's 251 California stores and distribution centers are in the City of San Diego.

The lawsuit against 99 Cents Only Stores was filed in San Joaquin County by 28 California agencies. The investigation was led by six agencies: the San Diego City Attorney's Office and the district attorney's offices of Fresno, Los Angeles, San Joaquin, Solano and Sonoma counties.

As part of the settlement, 99 Cents Only Stores will pay \$1.8 million in civil penalties, \$312,000 in costs and \$250,000 toward supplemental environmental projects.

The San Diego City Attorney's Office will receive \$105,000 to fund future enforcement of consumer and environmental protection laws, and nearly \$21,000 to reimburse its costs.

"This is another victory for San Diego's landfills, which were never meant to be a dumping ground for toxic waste," City Attorney Jan Goldsmith said. **"I am proud of the work done here by our Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit, and of the work it does every day to protect San Diego's environment."**

Upon being notified of the widespread issues, 99 Cents Only Stores worked cooperatively to remedy the issue, enhance its environmental compliance program and train its employees to properly handle hazardous waste generated through damage, spills and returns.

In settling the case before trial, 99 Cents Only Stores made no admission of guilt.

Among the toxic, reactive, ignitable and/or corrosive materials that will be strictly tracked are over-the-counter medications, pharmaceuticals, aerosol products, batteries, electronic devices and pool chemicals.

The City Attorney's Consumer & Environmental Protection Unit (CEPU) maintains a Consumer Hotline at (619) 533-5600, which consumers can call to report consumer complaints. For consumer tips and information, check out consumer news on the City Attorney's webpage, Newsletters/Office of the City Attorney or at <http://www.sandiego.gov/cityattorney/media/newsletters.shtml>

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