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# San Diego City Attorney Jan I. Goldsmith

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Dollar Tree to Pay \$2.72 Million for Environmental Violations** *Illegally Disposed of Hazardous Wastes at its Retail Stores and Distribution Centers*

Dollar Tree Stores, Inc., which operates six stores in San Diego and 25 others in the County, is paying \$2.72 million to settle an environmental-protection lawsuit filed by 45 California district attorneys and two city attorneys, including San Diego's.

The judgment is the result of an investigation into Dollar Tree Stores' unlawful disposal of hazardous waste products into trash bins at each of its stores and distribution centers, over 480 facilities in California.

The waste included ignitable and corrosive liquids, toxic materials, batteries, electronic devices and other e-waste, as well as other hazardous waste generated by circumstances including spills and damage.

Hazardous materials were being illegally handled and, rather than being transported to authorized hazardous waste facilities, hazardous wastes were illegally transported to local landfills that are not permitted to accept such waste.

Dollar Tree Stores, which cooperated throughout the investigation, admitted no guilt in settling the complaint and agreeing to pay civil penalties and costs. As part of the settlement, the Virginia-based chain was ordered to continue implementing a company-wide hazardous-waste compliance program.

The complaint was filed by District Attorney Nancy E. O'Malley of Alameda County on behalf of 46 agencies. The San Diego City Attorney's Office played a leading role in investigating the case and, as a result, will receive \$207,500 of the civil penalties and \$54,500 to defray costs. The funds will be used to pay for the Office's consumer and environmental enforcement activities.

**“This is yet another victory for San Diego's landfills, which were never meant to handle toxic and hazardous wastes,”** City Attorney Jan Goldsmith said. **“The systematic illegal disposal of hazardous waste is a real threat to our water supply, our health and the health of future generations. It is unfortunate that it takes such vigorous enforcement to achieve compliance with our environmental laws.”**

Dollar Tree Stores adopted and implemented new policies and improved procedures and training programs designed to properly manage and dispose of hazardous waste. The hazardous waste is now being collected by state-registered haulers who transport it to authorized disposal facilities, and disposal is properly documented.

Deputy City Attorney Michael Hudson was part of the lead team, building the case against Dollar Tree with prosecutors from the District Attorney's Offices of Alameda, Monterey and Yolo counties.

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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