**District Attorney Announces $11 Million Settlement with AutoZone for Illegal Disposal of Hazardous Waste**

From August 2013 through September 2015, District Attorneys’ offices throughout California conducted 56 inspections of dumpster bins at 49 separate AutoZone facilities. These investigations found numerous instances of unlawful disposal of hazardous waste including batteries, aerosol cans, electronic devices, and hundreds of discarded bottles and other receptacles containing automotive fluids and other regulated hazardous waste.

These investigative efforts revealed that AutoZone allowed its customers to deposit hazardous automotive fluids and other waste items into regular trash containers in AutoZone stores’ parking lots throughout California. AutoZone facilities in 45 counties in California were affected by these environmental violations. It is estimated that AutoZone disposed of over five million hazardous waste items in California.

San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra and ten other prosecutor’s offices throughout the state, announced today that they reached an $11 million settlement with AutoZone, Inc. (AutoZone), to resolve allegations that the company violated state laws governing hazardous waste, hazardous materials, and confidential consumer information. AutoZone is charged with illegally disposing of millions of hazardous waste items, including used motor oil and automotive fluids, at landfills not authorized to accept hazardous waste. Joining in the settlement are the District Attorneys of Alameda, Monterey, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Solano, Ventura and Yolo Counties, and the Los Angeles City Attorney.

“This settlement holds AutoZone accountable for violating laws that are in place to protect the privacy of consumer information and ensure the safe handling of hazardous materials,” said District Attorney Summer Stephan. “This case serves as a reminder to corporations of the importance of abiding by environmental protection laws that safeguard the public’s health and protect our environment.”

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**For Immediate Release**

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AutoZone is a retailer and distributor of automotive replacement parts, accessories, and engine additives in North America, and owns or operates approximately 600 retail stores and a distribution center. San Diego County has approximately 50 AutoZone facilities.

Since 2009, AutoZone failed to comply with laws regulating hazardous waste and hazardous materials. The company also violated laws protecting vulnerable confidential consumer information by unlawfully disposing of customer records without having rendered personal information unreadable.

The settlement requires a monetary settlement of $11 million. This consists of $8.9 million for civil penalties, $1.35 million for supplemental environmental projects, and $750,000 for reimbursement of investigative and enforcement costs. AutoZone gets a credit of $1 million against the penalties if it incurs at least $2 million in environmental enhancement work not required by law. In addition, the settlement includes provisions requiring AutoZone to undergo a general compliance audit and a trash receptacle audit to ensure hazardous waste and confidential consumer information are being properly disposed of at all facilities. The results of the audit must be shared with the public. The company must also comply with 23 injunctive requirements to comply with environmental protection and confidential consumer information protection laws.

The San Diego County District Attorney’s Office will receive $435,000 in civil penalties and $35,000 in attorney’s fees and costs.

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*About the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office*

The San Diego County DA’s Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.*