



**GREGORY D. TOTTE**  
**District Attorney**

**NEWS RELEASE**

vcdistrictattorney.com

Twitter: @VenturaDAOoffice

---

Contact: Dominic Kardum  
Senior Deputy District Attorney  
Telephone: 805-662-1750  
E-mail: dominic.kardum@ventura.org  
Approved: MKF *MKF*  
Date: June 6, 2019  
Release No.: 19-049

**Pleas Entered By Santa Clara Waste Water and Green Compass  
Environmental Solutions For 2014 Explosion and 2015 Possession of Unreported Chemicals**

*VENTURA, California* – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten and California State Attorney General Xavier Beccera announced today Santa Clara Waste Water Company and Green Compass Environmental Solutions, LLC (corporate defendants) entered pleas for their roles in a November 2014 explosion at 815 Mission Rock Road in Santa Paula that injured numerous employees and first responders, and for the subsequent storage of undisclosed hazardous chemicals on site.

On November 18, 2014, at approximately 3:45 a.m., an explosion occurred at 815 Mission Rock Road, Santa Paula, a wastewater treatment facility owned and operated by the corporate defendants. The investigation revealed the blast was caused by the mixing and disposal of hazardous chemicals into a 5,040-gallon vacuum truck not rated to hold nor transport such chemicals. Numerous employees of the corporate defendants as well as firefighters and paramedics who responded to the scene and rendered aid were injured either by the initial explosion or by inhaling toxic vapors which developed on site shortly afterwards from the chemicals that exploded out of the vacuum truck.

In November 2015, a search warrant was served at the corporate defendants' facility in Santa Paula which led to the discovery of approximately 5,500 gallons of sodium hydroxide, also known as Petromax, stored within a locked shipping container. These chemicals were required by law to be reported into the California Environmental Reporting System (CERS), yet the corporate defendants' officials had not reported their possession of Petromax since 2013.

The corporate defendants pled no contest to eight crimes in the consolidated indictment, including four felonies: conspiracy to impede an environmental enforcement official; knowing failure to warn of a serious concealed danger, specifically sodium chlorite; filing a false or forged instrument for recording in a public office; and dissuading a witness from reporting a crime. The corporate defendants also pled no contest to four misdemeanors: impeding an environmental enforcement official; failure to update the hazardous materials business plan; failure to update the hazardous materials inventory, and submission of false records or statements to the California Environmental Reporting System. As a result of their pleas today, the corporate defendants will be ordered to pay \$2,797,621 in restitution. This is in addition to \$800,000 of restitution previously paid by other convicted co-defendants; for a total amount of court-ordered victim restitution of \$3,597,621 in this case.

To date, eight other individually charged co-defendants have entered pleas in this case. Marlene Faltemier, the final co-defendant whose charges remain pending at this time, is due back in court on June 17, 2019, at 8:30 a.m. in courtroom 22 before Judge Kent M. Kellegrew. A sentencing hearing for the corporate defendants is scheduled for August 23, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 36. The investigation and prosecution of this case is the result of a joint effort by the California Attorney General's Office; the Ventura County District Attorney's Office; the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA); the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT); the State Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA); and the Ventura County Environmental Health Division.

###

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

Follow the Ventura County District Attorney's Office on Twitter @VenturaDAOoffice