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**District Attorney**

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Settlement Reached with AutoZone for Illegal Disposal of Hazardous Waste Statewide**

*VENTURA, California* – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today an \$11 million civil settlement with AutoZone, Inc. (AutoZone), to resolve allegations the company violated state laws governing the handling of 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. The Ventura County District Attorney joined the California Attorney General, along with the District Attorneys of Alameda, Monterey, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo Counties, and the Los Angeles City Attorney in the prosecution of this case.

AutoZone is a retailer and distributor of automotive replacement parts, accessories, and engine additives in North America, and owns or operates approximately 600 California retail stores as well as a distribution center. From August 2013 through September 2015, District Attorneys' offices throughout California conducted 56 inspections of waste bins from 49 separate AutoZone facilities. These investigations found numerous instances of unlawfully disposed hazardous waste including batteries, aerosol spray cans, electronic devices, and hundreds of discarded bottles and other receptacles containing automotive fluids, used oil, and other regulated hazardous waste. These investigative efforts revealed that AutoZone allowed its customers to deposit hazardous automotive fluids and other regulated waste items into trash containers in AutoZone stores' parking lots throughout California, which AutoZone employees then commingled with the stores' ordinary landfill waste. AutoZone

facilities in 45 California counties were affected by these environmental violations. It is estimated that AutoZone disposed of over five million hazardous waste items in California during the covered period.

Since 2009, AutoZone failed to comply with laws regulating hazardous waste and hazardous materials. In addition to the environmental violations summarized above, AutoZone also violated laws protecting confidential consumer information by unlawfully disposing of customer records before rendering personal information contained therein unreadable.

The settlement requires a monetary payment of \$11 million from AutoZone. This payment is comprised of \$8.9 million in civil penalties (including \$815,500 to the County of Ventura), \$1.35 million for supplemental environmental projects, and \$750,000 for reimbursement of investigative and enforcement costs (including \$52,000 to the County of Ventura). AutoZone gets a credit of \$1 million against civil penalties if it expends at least \$2 million for environmental enhancement measures beyond those required by law. In addition, the settlement includes terms requiring AutoZone to undergo future compliance auditing to ensure hazardous waste and confidential consumer information are being properly disposed of at their multiple facilities. The results of these compliance audits must be shared with the public under the terms of the settlement. Finally, AutoZone must also abide by 23 injunctive requirements to ensure future compliance with both environmental-protection laws and laws protecting confidential consumer information.

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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.

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