



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

4/18/17

**DOLLAR GENERAL STORES TO PAY \$1.12 MILLION SETTLEMENT
IN HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL CASE**

The Tulare County District Attorney's Office, along with 31 other California District Attorneys, announced yesterday that Kern County Superior Court Judge Sidney P. Chapin has ordered the Tennessee based company Dolgen California, and its subsidiary corporations, that own and operate Dollar General Stores and a Distribution Center in California to pay \$1.125 Million as part of a civil settlement in an environmental prosecution.

The Final Judgment agreed to by Dolgen California, DG Strategic II, and DG Strategic VII, resolves allegations made in a civil enforcement lawsuit filed April 11, 2017, in Kern County. The lawsuit alleged that Dollar General retail stores throughout the state and their distribution center unlawfully handled and disposed of various hazardous wastes and materials over a 5-year period. Those hazardous wastes and materials included automotive fluids, alkaline batteries, electronic waste, aerosol cans, expired over the counter medications, and other toxic, ignitable, and corrosive wastes.

Inspectors from district attorney offices and environmental regulators statewide conducted a series of undercover inspections of waste bins originating at Dollar General retail stores and facilities. The inspections revealed that Dollar General retail stores and their distribution center had been routinely and systematically sending hazardous wastes to local landfills throughout California that were not permitted to receive those wastes. Tulare County District Attorney investigators and Tulare County Environmental Health performed three waste inspections, with similar results. Regulators also found the documentation of employee hazardous waste training to be inaccurate or incomplete.

Dollar General was cooperative throughout the investigation and quickly responded to enhance its policies and procedures designed to eliminate the improper disposal of hazardous waste products in California. The Judgment requires hazardous waste be labeled, packaged and stored to minimize the risk of exposure to employees and customers. The proper handling of hazardous wastes also ensures that incompatible wastes do not combine to cause dangerous chemical reactions. Hazardous waste produced by California Dollar General retail stores, through damage, spills, and returns, is now

being collected by state-registered haulers, taken to proper disposal facilities, and properly documented.

Under the settlement, Dolgen California must pay \$500,000 in civil penalties and \$375,000 to reimburse the costs of the investigation. Of those penalties and costs, \$60,000 are awarded to the Tulare County District Attorney's Office, and \$8,817.50 to Tulare County Environmental Health. An additional \$112,000 will fund supplemental environmental projects furthering consumer protection and environmental enforcement in California. Dolgen will also fund hazardous waste minimization and enhanced compliance projects valued at \$138,000. The retailer will be bound under the terms of a permanent injunction prohibiting similar future violations of law.

*Media inquiries can be directed to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare
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COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dollar General Stores to Pay \$1.12 Million in Hazardous Waste Settlement
Stores throughout the State improperly handled and disposed of hazardous wastes

Woodland, CA – April 17, 2017 – Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig, along with 31 other California District Attorneys, announced today that Kern County Superior Court Judge Sidney P. Chapin has ordered the Tennessee-based company Dolgen California and its subsidiary corporations, to pay \$1.125 Million as part of a settlement of a civil-environmental prosecution. Dolgen and its subsidiary corporations own and operate Dollar General stores and distribution center in California

The consent judgment resolves allegations made in a civil enforcement lawsuit filed April 11, 2017, in Kern County. The lawsuit alleges that Dollar General retail stores throughout the state and its distribution center unlawfully handled and disposed of various hazardous wastes and materials over a five-year period. Those hazardous wastes and materials included automotive fluids, alkaline batteries, electronic waste, aerosol cans, expired over the counter medications and other toxic, ignitable and corrosive wastes.

“This settlement holds Dolgen California and its subsidiary corporations responsible for years of unlawful management of hazardous waste,” said District Attorney Reisig. “The terms of this settlement will require these companies to improve the training of their staff and the monitoring and management of their hazardous waste.”

Inspectors from district attorney offices, and environmental regulators statewide, conducted a series of undercover inspections of waste bins originating at Dollar General retail stores and facilities. The inspections revealed that Dollar General retail stores and their distribution center had frequently been sending hazardous wastes to local landfills throughout California that were not permitted to receive those wastes. Regulators also found the documentation of employee hazardous-waste training to be incomplete.

Dollar General was cooperative throughout the investigation and quickly responded to enhance its policies and procedures designed to eliminate the improper disposal of hazardous waste products in California Stores. The judgment requires hazardous waste be labeled, packaged and stored to minimize the risk of exposure to employees and customers. The proper handling of hazardous wastes also ensures that incompatible wastes do not combine to cause dangerous chemical reactions. Hazardous waste produced by California Dollar General retail stores through damage, spills, and returns is now being collected by state-registered haulers, taken to proper disposal facilities, and properly documented.

Under the settlement, Dolgen California must pay \$500,000 in civil penalties and \$375,000 to reimburse the costs of the investigation. An additional \$112,000 will fund supplemental environmental projects furthering consumer protection and environmental enforcement in California. Also, Dolgen will fund hazardous waste minimization and enhanced compliance projects valued at \$138,000. The retailer will be bound under the terms of a permanent injunction prohibiting similar future violations of law.

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