

**DTSC Director Debbie Raphael's Statement
Exide, Vernon
Order to Suspend Operations
April 24, 2013**

Good morning and welcome the California Department of Toxic Substances Control's media call announcing today's enforcement action at the Exide facility in Vernon. The facility recycles lead from automotive batteries.

Today, because of significant ongoing releases to the environment and unacceptable health risks to the community and workers from airborne emissions, we served the Exide facility's management with an order to suspend operations. This order takes effect immediately.

This order requires Exide to address these releases and come into acceptable standards that address the risks to the community, workers, and the environment. The order will not be lifted until this is accomplished.

DTSC has worked hard with the facility in the past two years to ensure the plant reduces its emissions to a level that is protective. However, recent risk calculations by the South Coast Air Management District in conjunction with our review of technical reports summarizing the integrity of facility piping have shown that this facility poses an unacceptable risk to human health and the environment, and must suspend its operations until it comes into compliance.

With more than 30 million cars in California, we clearly need an effective method of recycling the millions of used automotive batteries that are generated each year. The lead acid battery recycling industry is one of the most successful in the nation. Placing these batteries in a landfill wastes an important resource and can pose significant risks if not handled properly. But recyclers must also play by the rules.

The suspension we are announcing today represents DTSC's and this administration's commitment to taking strong action when a facility demonstrates that it is unwilling or unable to comply with the law.

Why is this Action Being Taken Now?

When I became Director two years ago, I found that the permit process for Exide was stalled. I selected a new project chief and directed him to move the process toward resolution by accomplishing three main goals:

- We must re-engage the community. We had not communicated with the community since 2006, and there were many questions that were never answered.
- We must demand that Exide determine the extent of contamination at the facility and implement a comprehensive corrective action clean-up that addresses contamination caused by Exide beyond facility boundary
- We must ensure the facility is brought into compliance with state hazardous waste standards.

We are taking this action now for two key reasons. In March the South Coast AQMD issued a human health risk assessment that showed the stacks on this facility were releasing high levels of arsenic.

Second, also in March, we received a report from the facility on the integrity of its storm water piping system that carries water laden with metals and contaminants from the site. The report showed that the storm water piping system lacked integrity and was releasing hazardous waste into the environment.

Based on these factors, we made a determination that this facility poses an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health, worker safety and the environment, and took the step of suspending Exide's operation.

I'd now like to open the call up for questions.