



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

NEWS RELEASE

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Maureen F. Gorsen, Director

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL
CRACKS DOWN ON ILLEGAL COMPUTER DUMPING
Action Reinforces Ban on Throwing Away Electronic Waste and Computers

SACRAMENTO –The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) announced today that 21 were arrested or received citations for the illegal disposal of hazardous waste including electronic waste such as old computers in the Puente Hills Landfill. A collaborative effort of DTSC's Office of Criminal Investigations, the California Integrated Waste Management Board, and the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, the planned enforcement action highlights the fact that, if put in landfills, electronic waste can release toxic metals into the environment.

"More than ever, DTSC teams up with local authorities to catch those who illegally dispose of hazardous waste," said DTSC Director Maureen F. Gorsen. "Our experience last year with statewide sting operations targeted at illegal hazardous waste transportation got the word out in no uncertain terms that we are serious about protecting the environment and public health from illegal activities," Gorsen added.

Operated by the Los Angeles County Sanitation District, the Puente Hills Landfill is located in Los Angeles County near Whittier. The landfill occupies 1,500 acres and is considered one of the largest sanitary landfill in the nation. It accepts one-third of Los Angeles County's trash and is permitted to receive a little more than 13,000 tons of garbage each day. For this operation, the landfill fully cooperated with DTSC and the other agencies.

According to the Sanitation Districts' Solid Waste Management Department Head Grace R. Chan, P.E., "We are committed to operating our facilities in a safe manner in compliance with regulations. That's why we not only conduct comprehensive inspection programs at our facilities for unacceptable wastes, and cooperate with periodic checks by regulatory agencies, but we also provide the public with appropriate management opportunities for electronic waste such as regular, ongoing collection events held throughout the county."

DTSC's Office of Criminal Investigations plans and conducts enforcement initiatives in coordination with city attorneys, county district attorneys, county health officers and local fire departments. These pro-active enforcement efforts, like the highly successful hazardous waste transporter stings, have already prevented the illegal dumping of nearly 60 tons of hazardous waste at landfills or other unauthorized points where they might endanger the public.

For this operation, DTSC criminal investigators worked with scientists and Sanitation District staff to identify, detect and verify that individuals or companies do not illegally dispose of their hazardous waste, including electronic waste, in the landfill. Anyone caught illegally disposing of their hazardous waste are either arrested or cited on the spot. Those arrested are then later charged by local district attorneys with a variety of crimes, including illegal disposal of hazardous waste and transporting hazardous waste without registration. Such violations of the law are punishable with fines and up to one year in county jail.

Businesses that generate hazardous waste must use transporters registered by DTSC to haul hazardous waste, and the waste must have a hazardous waste manifest accompanying it. Manifests track waste shipments and ensure that hazardous waste is properly disposed. Through the proper handling of hazardous waste, threats to public health and the degradation of the environment are avoided.

DTSC also provides assistance to regional environmental task forces that investigate a variety of environmental crimes. Some of the criminal acts brought to the attention of task forces involve the discharge of contaminants which may not be classified as hazardous waste, but still pose a danger to the environment or human health.

To find out if a hazardous waste transporter is registered or to find additional information about DTSC, please visit our website at www.dtsc.ca.gov. For complaints involving the illegal dumping, storage, or transportation of hazardous waste please call 1-800-69-TOXICS.

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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit www.dtsc.ca.gov. To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942.

The mission of the Department of Toxic Substances Control is to provide the highest level of safety, and to protect public health and the environment from toxic harm.