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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Lowe's to Pay \$18.1 Million Settlement for
Environmental Violations**

Yolo County will receive nearly \$1 Million as part of the settlement

(Woodland, CA) – April 2, 2014- Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig, along with 31 other California District Attorneys and two City Attorneys, announced today that Alameda County Superior Court Judge George C. Hernandez, Jr. has ordered North Carolina-based Lowe's Home Centers to pay \$18.1 million as part of a settlement of a civil environmental prosecution.

The judgment is the culmination of a civil enforcement action filed in Alameda County, claiming that more than 118 Lowe's stores throughout the state unlawfully handled and disposed of various hazardous wastes and materials over a six and a half year period. Those hazardous wastes and materials included pesticides, aerosols, paint and colorants solvents, adhesives, batteries, mercury-containing fluorescent bulbs, electronic waste and other toxic, ignitable, and corrosive materials.

From 2011 to 2013, investigators from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, along with Yolo County District Attorney investigators and other district attorney investigators and environmental regulators, conducted a series of statewide waste inspections of dumpsters belonging to Lowe's stores. The inspections revealed that Lowe's was routinely and systematically sending hazardous wastes to local landfills throughout California that were not permitted to receive those wastes. The inspections also revealed that some Lowe's stores were discarding directly into the trash items such as batteries and compact fluorescent light bulbs instead of recycling them. These were items that had been gathered from customers at store recycling kiosks.

Lowe's was cooperative throughout the investigation and has implemented enhanced policies and procedures designed to eliminate the disposal of hazardous waste products in California. Stores are required to retain their hazardous waste in segregated, labeled containers to minimize the risk of exposure to employees and customers and to ensure that incompatible wastes do not combine to cause dangerous chemical reactions.

Hazardous waste produced by California Lowe's stores will be taken to proper disposal facilities and is to be properly documented and accounted for.

Under the final judgment, Lowe's must pay \$12.85 million in civil penalties and costs. An additional \$2.075 million will fund supplemental environmental projects furthering consumer protection and environmental enforcement in California, and Lowe's will fund hazardous waste minimization projects of \$3.175 million. The retailer will be bound under the terms of a permanent injunction prohibiting similar future violations of law.

There is one Lowe's store in Yolo County located in West Sacramento which unlawfully disposed of hazardous waste. The Yolo County District Attorney's office had a significant role in the investigations of Lowe's violations. As a result, the Yolo County District Attorney's office will receive \$807,000 in penalties and \$25,000 in costs. Settlements from civil prosecutions are deposited in a trust account with the Consumer Fraud and Environmental Prosecution Division and may only be used in actions involving environmental violations. The Yolo County Environmental Health Department will receive \$100,000 in penalties and \$4,250 in costs.

San Joaquin County Deputy District Attorney David Irey, one of the lead prosecutors in the case, complimented the efforts of the Yolo County District Attorney's office and Heidi D'Agostino. "Nobody participated in more investigations of Lowe's stores throughout the state than Yolo County DA Enforcement Officer D'Agostino," said Irey. "This settlement recognizes District Attorney Reisig's commitment to these important statewide environment prosecutions."

District Attorney Reisig stated "Citizens of Yolo County demand no less of businesses than of themselves in obeying the State's environmental laws. Today's action represents a major victory and emphasizes our commitment to our environment. I applaud California's Department of Toxic Substances Control and all of the prosecutors involved in this case."

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