



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 8, 2018 **Contact:** David Irej, Assistant Chief Deputy District Attorney
david.irej@yolocounty.org

Home Depot to Pay \$27.84 Million Settlement for Environmental and Customer Privacy Violations

Stores throughout the State, including two in Yolo County, illegally disposed of hazardous wastes and confidential customer records

Woodland, CA – March 8, 2018 – Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, and eight other prosecutor’s offices throughout the state, announced today that Alameda County Superior Court Judge Brad Seligman has ordered Georgia-based Home Depot U.S.A., Inc., to pay \$27.84 million to resolve allegations that Home Depot unlawfully disposed of hazardous wastes and discarded records without rendering private customer information unreadable.

“Yesterday’s settlement not only imposes substantial penalties against Home Depot for its past violations, but also puts important safeguards in place to prevent similar violations going forward,” said District Attorney Reisig. “I thank Attorney General Becerra and my fellow District Attorneys for their partnership on this and other important cases that protect California consumers and the environment.”

The judgment is the culmination of a civil enforcement action filed on February 15, 2018, in Alameda County and led by the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office, the California Attorney General’s Office, the District Attorneys of Monterey, Riverside, San Diego, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Ventura and Yolo, and the City Attorney of Los Angeles. Additionally, California the Department of Toxic Substances Control assisted. The prosecutors’ civil complaint alleged that more than 300 Home Depot stores and distribution centers throughout the state were routinely and systematically sending hazardous wastes to local landfills that were not permitted to receive those wastes. They were also tossing documents containing sensitive customer information into store trash bins, potentially exposing the information to identity thieves.

From 2013 to 2015, inspectors from the Yolo County District Attorney's Office, along with investigators from other district attorney offices and environmental regulators statewide, conducted a series of waste inspections of dumpsters belonging to Home Depot stores. A total of 45 Home Depot dumpsters were inspected, and every one of these dumpsters contained hazardous waste, including pesticides, aerosols, paint and colorants, solvents, adhesives, batteries, mercury-containing fluorescent bulbs, electronic waste, key shavings, and other toxic, ignitable, and corrosive materials. Many of the dumpsters also contained discarded records containing sensitive customer information that had not been shredded or rendered unreadable, including customer names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.

Upon notice of the investigation, Home Depot took steps to cooperate and to dedicate additional resources toward environmental compliance and improving its hazardous-waste and customer-record management compliance programs. Among other things, Home Depot conducted dozens of its own compactor waste assessments, and placed customer records lock boxes in strategic locations throughout its stores to ensure the proper management of those documents by its employees. In addition, in this settlement, Home Depot has committed to employing hazardous-waste compliance managers dedicated specifically to ensuring the proper handling and management of hazardous wastes, and to conducting daily store inspections to ensure that hazardous waste and hazardous materials are being properly handled.

There are two Home Depot stores in Yolo County and both are subject to the terms of the settlement.

Under the final judgment, Home Depot must pay \$18.487 million in civil penalties and costs, and an additional \$2.513 million to fund supplemental environmental projects furthering consumer protection and environmental enforcement in California. Home Depot must also expend at least \$6.84 million for above-compliance environmental measures. Apart from monetary terms, the judgment also includes permanent injunctive terms that prohibit Home Depot from committing similar violations of law in the future.

###