

***\*NEWS RELEASE\****

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

***Stores Throughout the State Illegally Disposed of Hazardous Wastes and  
Confidential Customer Records***

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: James Burlison, Deputy District Attorney  
(831) 647-7713

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that the Alameda County Superior Court has ordered Georgia-based Home Depot U.S.A., Inc. (“Home Depot”) to pay \$27.84 million to resolve allegations that Home Depot unlawfully disposed of hazardous waste and discarded records without rendering private customer information unreadable.

The judgment is a culmination of a civil enforcement action filed on February 15 in Alameda County and jointly prosecuted by the California Attorney General’s Office, the Monterey County District Attorney’s Office, the District Attorneys of Alameda, Riverside, San Diego, Santa Clara, Ventura and Yolo, and the City Attorney of Los Angeles, with assistance by the Department of Toxic Substances Control. The civil complaint filed by the prosecutors 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 and were tossing documents containing sensitive customer information into store trash bins, potentially exposing the information to identity thieves.

For several years, investigators from the Monterey County District Attorney’s Office partnered with other district attorney office investigators and environmental regulators statewide to conduct a series of waste inspections of dumpsters belonging to Home Depot stores. A total of 45 trash compactors belonging to 31 Home Depot stores were inspected and the inspections revealed that all 45 compactors contained hazardous waste and many of the compactors also contained discarded records containing sensitive customer information that had not been shredded or rendered unreadable. The unlawfully disposed of hazardous wastes included pesticides, aerosols, paint and colorants, solvents, adhesives, batteries, mercury-containing fluorescent bulbs, electronic waste, key shavings and other toxic, ignitable and corrosive materials. The discarded records containing customer information included customer names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.

Upon notice of the investigation, Home Depot took steps to cooperate and to dedicate additional resources towards environmental compliance and improving its hazardous waste and customer records 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 Monterey County which are subject to the terms of the settlement. Under the final judgment, Home Depot must pay \$18.487 million in civil penalties and costs. An additional \$2.513 million will fund supplemental environmental projects furthering consumer protection and environmental enforcement and Home Depot will be required to expend at least \$6.84 million for above compliance environmental measures. Home Depot will also be bound under the terms of a permanent injunction prohibiting similar future violations.

Monterey County District Attorney Investigators John Coletti, Alicia Cox, Cristina Gunter, Jorge Gutierrez, Guillermo Mixer, Adam Sepagan, and Monterey County Environmental Health Specialists Debbie Anderson and Rich Patterson each provided valuable assistance during the course of this lengthy investigation. The witness interviews and inspections conducted by DAI John Coletti were instrumental in uncovering evidence of the customer records violations.