



County of San Bernardino
Office of the District Attorney
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NEWS RELEASE

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Verizon to Pay \$7.7 Million in Statewide Environmental Settlement

San Bernardino, Calif. – San Bernardino County District Attorney Jason Anderson announced today that Verizon Wireless will pay \$7.7 million to resolve a statewide civil enforcement action involving environmental violations at hundreds of the company's wireless telecommunication cell towers across Southern California.

"Verizon's failure to comply with law that govern hazardous materials created avoidable risks," said District Attorney Anderson. "The investigation found consistent gaps in required reporting, employee training, and inspection access across hundreds of facilities. This judgment ensures accountability while strengthening transparency for first responders at thousands of cell towers and requires that Verizon maintain compliance going forward."

Beginning in January 2019, violations occurred at numerous Verizon cell towers where hazardous materials and above ground petroleum storage tanks are used to power emergency generators and backup systems. Verizon stores and uses materials such as lead acid batteries and petroleum products at these sites which require detailed reporting and proper hazardous materials management under California law. The complaint alleges that Verizon repeatedly failed to submit complete and accurate Hazardous Materials Business Plans to the California Environmental Reporting System. Verizon also failed to maintain copies of these plans onsite as required and failed to provide adequate employee training for responding to hazardous material releases.

Verizon also failed to allow inspections at multiple locations and failed to pay required permit fees that support local oversight of hazardous materials. These requirements exist to ensure that first responders, environmental regulators, and public safety officials have accurate information about hazardous materials stored at commercial sites in the event of an emergency.

Verizon was brought into compliance only after investigative agencies approached the company regarding its violations. There was no evidence of environmental harm at the facilities.

Deputy District Attorney Stephanie Weissman, a member of the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit, prosecuted the case for San Bernardino County.

Under the judgment Verizon will pay a total of \$7.7 million which includes \$7,125,000 in civil penalties, \$200,000 in investigative costs, and \$375,000 in Supplemental Environmental Projects, also known as SEPs.

Within San Bernardino County the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office will receive \$813,437.50 in penalties and \$27,508.50 in costs. The San Bernardino County Fire Protection District Hazardous Materials Division will receive \$315,375.00 in penalties and \$12,000 in costs.

The case was filed in Orange County Superior Court by the Orange County District Attorney's Office and brought by the District Attorneys of Ventura, Los Angeles, Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego counties along with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office.

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