

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY TO EXPEDITE EXIDE CLEANUP

As this Board knows, the Exide battery recycling plant emitted lead, arsenic, antimony, and other substances into the air above the City of Vernon for decades. These emissions contaminated the land of not only Vernon, but of the surrounding municipalities and unincorporated communities. The plant was allowed to operate under a temporary permit for 33 years.

Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) reports that lead contamination could stretch as far as 1.7 miles away from the Exide plant, potentially impacting up to 10,000 residential properties. Exposure to high lead levels can affect the brain, kidneys, liver, and other organs. Children and pregnant women face higher risks. This means that children who want to play in their yards risk impacting their growth, learning, and behavioral development.

In October of last year, this Board acted boldly to bring attention to this issue and to do what it could within its purview to protect the health of these families, including the deployment of community-health workers (*promotoras*) to facilitate the use of cleanup vouchers and the launch of a comprehensive health campaign. These efforts are underway. Additionally, the County is in the process of mobilizing for the rapid exterior residential assessments, as directed by this Board.

- MORE -

MOTION

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

KUEHL _____

KNABE _____

ANTONOVICH _____

SOLIS _____

Since the Board action in October, attention to the Exide disaster has increased substantially. The California State Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials held a hearing in Sacramento on the proposed Exide Facility Closure Plan. I travelled to the capitol to testify at this hearing, as did County experts and impacted community members. There I urged the Committee to conduct a subsequent hearing near the Exide facility so that the voices of all impacted community members can be heard by the Assembly.

I also asked that the State devote substantially more resources than the \$8.5 million the Governor proposed for the current and upcoming fiscal years. I noted that the State has estimated the cost of cleaning a single home at approximately \$45,000. If the State's estimate that between 5,000 and 10,000 homes may require cleanup, the total cleanup cost could therefore be in the hundreds of millions, demonstrating the inadequacy of the proposed funding allocation.

Continued advocacy by the County of Los Angeles can help to expedite the response to this environmental disaster and to thereby protect the health of over tens of thousands of residents of Los Angeles County. Our constituents, many of whom are low income and live in single parent households with children, have waited too long, and should not have to wait any longer.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Direct the Chief Executive Officer to:

1. Send a five-signature letter to Governor Brown, the legislative leaders, and the Los Angeles County Legislative Delegation urging the State to provide increased funding and adequate resources to:
 - a. Expedite and complete assessment of all potentially affected properties;
 - b. Expedite the cleanup of the most severely contaminated properties; and
 - c. Urge support for convening a joint hearing of the Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials and the Senate Standing Committee on Environmental Quality in Los Angeles County, so that residents of the affected communities can be heard.

2. Instruct the County's Sacramento advocates to actively support measures to expedite the required assessment and cleanup of affected properties, including seeking increased State funding and adequate resources to protect the safety and well-being of the Los Angeles County residents of the communities affected by Exide.
3. Request the Health Agency Director and the County's Legislative advocates in Sacramento to report back to the Board at its March 8, 2016 Board meeting, and monthly thereafter, on the progress of the issues related to Exide.

#