Message

From: Alpern, Michael [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=7A6D1FE1F61646D6B96ED0DD6F6C33CD-ALPERN, MIC]
Sent: 7/2/2022 12:02:42 AM
To: Yogi, David [Yogi.David@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: California Petitions Federal Government to add Exide to Superfund List - East LA Lead Facility needs US EPA support to expedite cleanup

FYI

From: Alpern, Michael
Sent: Friday, July 1, 2022 5:02 PM
To: Guzman, Martha <Guzman.Martha@epa.gov>; Scott, Jeff <Scott.Jeff@epa.gov>; Montgomery, Michael <Montgomery.Michael@epa.gov>; Lyons, John <Lyons.John@epa.gov>; Ebbert, Laura <Ebbert.Laura@epa.gov>; Sharpe, Sarah <Sharpe.Sarah@epa.gov>; Jordan, Deborah <Jordan.Deborah@epa.gov>; Poalinelli, Edwin <POALINELLI.EDWIN@EPA.GOV>; Colip, Matthew <colip.matthew@epa.gov>
Cc: Giarmoleo, Julia <Giarmoleo.Julia@epa.gov>
Subject: FW: California Petitions Federal Government to add Exide to Superfund List - East LA Lead Facility needs US EPA support to expedite cleanup

FYI. DTSC didn't issue their release till fairly late in the day (4:30pm).

Regards,

Mike Alpern - Director, Public Affairs
U.S. EPA Region 9 (Pacific Southwest)
(415) 947-4142 | alpern.michael@epa.gov
Follow us on Twitter: @EPAregion9

From: Wescott, Allison@DTSC <Allison.Wescott@dtsc.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 1, 2022 4:29 PM
To: Wescott, Allison@DTSC <Allison.Wescott@dtsc.ca.gov>
Subject: California Petitions Federal Government to add Exide to Superfund List - East LA Lead Facility needs US EPA support to expedite cleanup

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2022

Contact: Allison Wescott
(916) 963-6246

California Petitions Federal Government to add Exide to Superfund List

East LA Lead Facility needs US EPA support to expedite cleanup

SACRAMENTO – The California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) today formally requested that the former Exide facility in Vernon, and surrounding communities, be added to U.S. EPA's National Priorities List (NPL) also known as the Superfund. This would provide potentially millions of federal dollars for cleanup and expedite the remainder of the Exide cleanup.

"While Exide has walked away from its responsibility to clean up its decades of toxic pollution, California has stepped in to do right by this community and address the remnants of an industrial past that threatens the health of the most vulnerable among us," said **Governor Gavin Newsom**. "Today's announcement will take our efforts to the next level, as we aggressively pursue federal funds made available by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to further this critical work."

To date, California has allocated $700 million for the facility and residential cleanup, and has remediated nearly 4,000 properties. The DTSC portion of the Exide removal action is scheduled to continue until fall 2025, at which point 6,000 properties and additional facility cleanup will have been cleaned up. DTSC estimates it will cost an additional $150 million to complete the facility cleanup for which there is currently no funding in place. The industrial properties surrounding the facility have yet to be investigated and their cleanup costs are therefore unknown.

"Exide is one of the most contaminated lead sites in the country. A Superfund listing would bring federal resources and expertise to the table that have frankly been missing for too long. A "Superfund" designation would expedite cleanup of Exide's poisonous legacy with the community finally receiving the national attention they deserve," said **CalEPA Secretary Jared Blumenfeld**

The former Exide plant operated for more than 100 years as a lead acid battery recycling facility, but went bankrupt in 2020 without investigating the full extent of its contamination or cleaning up the contamination that the state of California identified as coming from the facility's operations. California has strenuously objected to the bankruptcy ruling that allowed Exide to abandon its facility and fiscal responsibilities for cleanup.

"To protect individuals, families and businesses in communities surrounding the former Exide facility, California has invested hundreds of millions of dollars, cleaned up thousands of the most contaminated properties, and taken ambitious steps to safely close the facility," **DTSC Director Dr. Meredith Williams** said. "We are excited about the potential to receive federal support and benefit from federal expertise to drive this cleanup toward completion and look forward to partnering with U.S. EPA as they review this request." DTSC's ability to recover costs associated with cleanup – a promise made to taxpayers – was thwarted when the former federal administration in 2020 allowed Exide to walk away from its facility and cleanup responsibilities. The Biden administration has demonstrated its commitment to protecting communities suffering from environmental injustices, and DTSC is asking for U.S. EPA's support in managing and funding the work that remains.

"We are fortunate to be receiving this request at a time when we have significant new resources from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to clean up more pollution in communities like the one suffering from lead pollution caused by Exide," **said EPA Pacific Southwest**

Regional Administrator Martha Guzman. "The EPA has been working diligently through our recent partnership with DTSC to decontaminate and take down all the smelter buildings at the Exide facility, and we look forward to continuing our work with the state of California to protect this community from lead pollution."

As evidenced by the release of U.S. EPA's Draft Strategy to Reduce Lead Exposures and Disparities in U.S. Communities, the Biden administration has recognized lead as a dangerous heavy metal that harms almost every organ and system in the human body, and U.S. EPA has prioritized action to reduce lead exposures. Contamination threatens the health of all people who live, work, and play in nearby vulnerable communities, and there is no known safe level of lead in the bodies of children. Thus, the serious health threats associated with lead exposures adds an acute urgency to this request.

Earlier this year, Congress passed President Biden's Infrastructure Law, which provided $1.5 billion to revitalize brownfields across the U.S. President Biden has also proposed $11.8 billion and over 16,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) employee hours in the 2022-23 budget to battle climate change, protect human health and the environment, and boost environmental justice initiatives.

DTSC hopes that such a partnership will lead to continued cooperation that will generate full awareness and inspire action on lead contamination in vulnerable communities across the state.

In the coming days and weeks, DTSC will provide U.S. EPA with information necessary to complete its review of the NPL request. First, DTSC will submit a Pre-CERCLA Screening checklist. Then, the site will be scored per the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) scoring methodology. If it scores high enough to warrant listing, it will go through a public notice and comment period to list it under the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). U.S. EPA may perform additional characterization as necessary, such as additional groundwater characterization. It takes approximately two years to go through the NPL process. Cleanup of the facility and surrounding communities will continue during this time.

View CalEPA's formal letter to US EPA.

View a visual representation of the formal process.

For more information on the Exide cleanup project, and to receive regular updates on progress, please visit our Exide web page.

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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit www.dtsc.ca.gov. To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942.

Allison Wescott *(she/her/hers)*
Deputy Director
Office of Communications
916-963-6246
Allison.Wescott@dtsc.ca.gov
Department of Toxic Substances Control

1001 "I" Street, P.O. Box 806, Sacramento, California 95812-0806
California Environmental Protection Agency