



November 5, 2024

Honorable Administrator Michael S. Regan
Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Honorable Administrator Regan,

On behalf of the City of Vernon, I am writing to express the City's strong support for the inclusion of the former Exide Technologies battery recycling facility (Exide) in Vernon, California into the Superfund National Priority List (NPL) and recognize the site, along with the surrounding impacted community, as a Superfund site. On September 4, 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the proposed addition of this site to the NPL.

Exide was shut down in 2015 and the company declared bankruptcy in 2020 without investigating the full extent of the damage. Exide Technologies shut down without cleaning up the known contamination that the State of California identified as coming from the facility's operations. The U.S. EPA is overseeing the partial demolition and cleanup of the facility, in consultation with the Department of Toxic Substances and Control, however the bankruptcy funds have failed to provide sufficient resources for cleanup.

On September 4, 2024, the U.S. EPA announced the proposed addition of the former Exide site located in Vernon to the Superfund National Priorities List. The list includes sites with the nation's most serious uncontrolled or abandoned releases of contamination, and the former Exide site fits that description. We believe that this is a great step forward in securing funding to clean up the hazardous substances that Exide left behind and ensuring that the surrounding communities trust that their health and safety is being protected. For these reasons, we ask that the former Exide site in Vernon is placed on the list.

Exide Technologies has left a legacy that has impacted the health and wellness of residents in neighboring communities for decades. The City of Vernon and its Health and Environmental Control Department stand by to support the regulatory and operational efforts to correct the injustices committed by Exide and the wrongs extended by the federal bankruptcy proceedings.

Vernon is home to a working population of over 50,000 people. Over the past several years, the City of Vernon has worked to implement environmental reforms to mitigate its industrial impacts on Southeast Los Angeles Environmental Justice communities, including attracting clean commerce through incentivizing green and tech industries, adopting zoning changes for more balanced land-uses, facilitating the development of housing, and growing Vernon's residential population. These efforts have been crucial in safeguarding our residents and workforce. The City of Vernon appreciates the EPA and DTSC's efforts to collaborate and expedite the site investigation and the listing process. We request that the EPA place the former Exide facility and surrounding impacted communities on the proposed National Priority List in Spring 2025. Additional funding, agency collaboration, and coordination are necessary to ensure that the

clean-up of soil and groundwater, which started in 2018, continues without interruption and is completed as expeditiously as possible.

We are grateful for the current administration's pledge to protect communities suffering from environmental injustices, and we thank you for considering this request from the City of Vernon. The U.S. EPA's support of the City's request to address the health burdens caused by lead contamination and other contaminants in the Southeast Los Angeles area would underscore this administration's worthy commitment to support the health and welfare of our communities.

Respectfully,



Judith Merlo
Mayor
City of Vernon, California

c:
Governor Gavin Newsom
U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
U.S. Senator Laphonza Butler
Representative Robert Garcia (CD 42)
Representative Jimmy Gomez (CD 34)
Yana Garcia, Cal EPA
CA Senator Lena Gonzalez (SD 33)
CA Senator Maria Durazo (SD 26)
Assemblymember Miguel Santiago (AD 54)
Supervisor Janice Hahn (District 4)
City of Bell
City of Commerce
City of Huntington Park
City of Los Angeles
City of Maywood