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Save Mart Supermarket Chain to Pay More Than \$2.5 Million Settlement for Environmental Violations

Stores Illegally Dumped Hazardous Wastes

District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley, together with 34 other California District Attorneys, has reached a settlement in a civil law enforcement action against Save Mart Supermarkets, totaling more than \$2.5 million. Save Mart Supermarkets is headquartered in Modesto, California, and operates throughout California as Food Maxx, Maxx Value Foods, and Lucky brands. The settlement, which was filed in San Joaquin County Superior Court, resolves allegations that Save Mart violated California laws for the safe storage, handling and disposal of hazardous waste generated from spills and customer returns of hazardous products.

Investigators from various environmental health agencies throughout the state and participating District Attorney's Offices as well as local hazardous waste inspectors engaged in a statewide investigation that revealed violations of law at Save Mart stores. Save Mart worked collaboratively with the prosecutors and investigating agencies to address the specific violations. As a result of the investigation and prosecution, regulated wastes produced by California Save Mart stores will now be properly stored, handled, transported, and disposed of at proper facilities and appropriate records will be kept documenting compliance with California law. The alleged violations occurred over a period of several years at most of the California Save Mart stores and distribution centers, which include Albertson's Stores acquired by Save Mart and converted to either the Lucky or the Save Mart brand.

Under the Final Judgment Save Mart must pay \$2.557 million in civil penalties, costs and expenses for supplemental environmental projects furthering consumer protection and environmental enforcement in the state, and will be bound under the terms of a permanent injunction prohibiting similar alleged violations of law in the future. Under the settlement, Save Mart will pay \$3,000.00 in civil penalties and cost recovery to the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office and \$3,900.00 in civil penalties and cost recovery to the Santa Barbara County Fire Department environmental regulators.

"Thanks to the outstanding investigative and legal efforts of the district attorney inspectors and environmental prosecutors from district attorney offices around the state, we can announce this significant victory for our citizens and our natural resources," says District Attorney Dudley. "As a result of the prosecution, California Save Mart stores have adopted enhanced policies and procedures designed to eliminate the disposal of hazardous waste products into store dumpsters."

□ SANTA BARBARA OFFICE
1112 Santa Barbara Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2300
Fax: (805) 568-2453

□ SANTA MARIA OFFICE
312-D East Cook Street
Santa Maria, CA 93454
(805) 346-7540
Fax: (805) 346-7588

□ LOMPOC OFFICE
115 Civic Center Plaza
Lompoc, CA 93436
(805) 737-7760
Fax: (805) 737-7732