



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
TODD SPITZER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

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**Orange County District Attorney's Office Joins 8 Other
California District Attorneys
in Settling Civil Case with Verizon Wireless for \$7.7 Million
Following Statewide Investigation into Failure to Allow Access
for Inspections of Cell Towers,
Other Aboveground Storage Tank Violations,
and Failure to Pay Hazardous Materials Permit Fees**

SANTA ANA – Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer, along with 8 other District Attorneys across California, announced the Orange County District Attorney's Office has reached a \$7.7 million settlement with Cellco Partnership DBA Verizon Wireless, a Delaware Corporation. This settlement resolves allegations that the company violated state environmental laws regulating hazardous materials release and response plans, hazardous materials permits, and above ground petroleum storage tanks.

Verizon Wireless is the largest provider of mobile telephone services in the United States. The company owns and operates thousands of cell sites throughout the state where hazardous materials and above ground petroleum storage tanks are used to power emergency generators and backup systems. These materials can potentially cause fires and explosions, release toxic chemical air contaminants, and are potentially corrosive. For these reasons, items stored at these locations above a threshold quantity are classified as hazardous and require permits along with detailed reporting and proper hazardous materials management under California law.

Reporting documents are designed to minimize health and safety impacts resulting from accidental release 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. The plan must include an inventory of hazardous materials, a site map, an emergency response strategy, and an employee training guide.

"As prosecutors, we have an absolute responsibility to protect the environment and the residents of Orange County from toxic chemicals and other hazardous waste. Companies that cut corners to break the law and endanger our environment in order to save on their bottom line will be held accountable," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "This case reinforces the urgent need for stronger compliance measures, and I

am incredibly proud of the environmental crimes investigators and prosecutors in my office as well as those in other District Attorney's offices whose diligent work brought these environmental violations to light."

The investigation, which was led by the District Attorney Offices of Orange County, San Bernardino County, and the Los Angeles City Attorney, found that Verizon failed to properly report hazardous materials, train on hazardous materials, allow on-site inspections, and pay permit fees for multiple site locations going back to 2019.

After prosecutors notified Verizon of these violations, they cooperated fully with prosecutors and took steps to pay all owed permit fees, correct all outstanding violations and implement policies and procedures to ensure future compliance.

Under the stipulated final judgment, Verizon will pay a total of \$7,700,000. This includes: \$7,125,000 in civil penalties, \$375,000 in Supplemental Environmental Compliance Projects, and \$200,000 in investigative costs.

The Orange County District Attorney's Office was joined by the District Attorneys of Los Angeles, Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties along with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office in this lawsuit.

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