

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2023

The Honorable Michael S. Regan  
Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Regan,

Thank you for your efforts to tackle environmental injustices that plague low-income communities of color. We are writing to urgently request the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designate the former Exide Technologies Inc. facility in Vernon, California to the Superfund National Priorities List. Doing so will correct decades of missteps by the federal government that left Southeast Los Angeles County Communities susceptible to toxic environmental pollution.

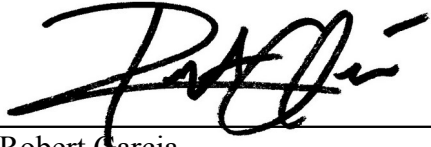
Under the previous Administration, the EPA and Department of Justice supported a bankruptcy plan for Exide Technologies, which committed decades-worth of environmental crimes by dumping lead and other hazardous contaminants into the air, soil, and water. Exide's crimes impacted mostly working-class, Latino communities who continue to suffer from cancer, asthma, learning disabilities, dangerous levels of lead in their blood, and more. Under the deal with federal prosecutors, Exide was able to escape all criminal liability and responsibility to clean up the facility and surrounding areas, leaving California taxpayers on the hook for the largest environmental clean-up in California's history. While, thanks to Governor Newsom and the State Legislature, the State of California has allocated more than \$750 million in taxpayer funding to address the crisis through cleanup and remediation efforts, soil testing, and community outreach, it is clear that only the federal government has the capacity to resolve this crisis.

Recent *Los Angeles Times* reporting suggests that the remediation efforts to date have not properly removed lead pollution from homes and neighborhoods. Follow-up testing revealed that over 500 of 3,370 remediated properties fail to meet State health standards for lead concentration, which is simply unacceptable. As you know well, lead contamination in soil and dust can cause developmental delays, difficulty learning, behavioral issues, and neurological damage in children. We are grateful to Los Angeles County and the leadership of Supervisors Solis and Hahn for helping provide residents with access to free blood lead testing and working to ensure State cleanup efforts are responsive to community needs. However, despite these measures, we believe the severity of the crisis, the failure of past remediation efforts to create healthy communities, and the risk to public health requires assistance from the EPA and the resources available under the Superfund program.

We appreciate the Agency's site investigation work underway to test air and soil samples so the EPA can formally demonstrate their linkage to the Exide as part of a formal Superfund rulemaking. We urge you to take all appropriate measures to further expedite these efforts and designate the site as a federal Superfund site. The Southeast Los Angeles neighborhoods we represent deserve the basic right to a clean, safe environment. Until now, our community has been denied those rights. Our constituents have faced both the health impacts of toxic exposure and the fear and uncertainty surrounding the future of cleanup efforts. Inclusion of these areas on the National Priorities list will help provide critical resources and expertise to ensure these communities benefit from proper clean-up. It is also crucial that EPA hear directly from community residents throughout the listing process to build trust and respond to community needs.

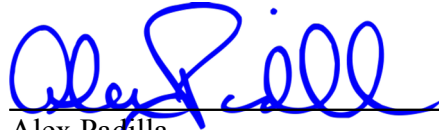
Thank you for your consideration of our request, and we stand ready to assist you in advancing our shared values to ensure that every person can live pollution free.

Sincerely,



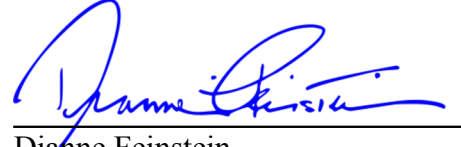
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Robert Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



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Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator