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Southeast Los Angeles Assemblymembers Respond to Proposed Exide Cleanup Funds in Budget Revision

SACRAMENTO— Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon (D-Lakewood), Assemblymember Cristina Garcia (D-Bell Gardens), Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo (D-Los Angeles), and Assemblymember Miguel Santiago (D-Los Angeles) released the following statements today regarding the proposed funding in Governor Newsom's 2021-22 revised budget to clean the former Exide battery plant in Vernon:

"This is a huge win for the people of Southeast LA," said Speaker Rendon. "For decades, the Exide facility polluted our homes, soil, and water- contamination that still exists, and continues to cause health problems in our children. This proposed funding will finally allow us to fully clean the Exide plant in Vernon and focus on the homes hardest hit by pollution. We will continue to work on lowering lead exposure from soil, water, and paint for all Californians. Today's announcement is a critical step in our recovery from Exide's contamination. I want to thank my legislative colleagues and LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis for their tireless advocacy on this issue, as well as every person in Southeast LA who stood up and spoke out against corporate environmental pollution. Today's victory belongs to you."

"When I got started in government my goal was to make our system work for all Californians, not just the ones born in the right zip code, with a strong focus on fighting for those victimized by environmental racism. Today, Governor Newsom's May budget revision reflects those values by committing more than \$450 million to clean up Exide's toxic mess. That's a victory and another great step towards ensuring there is justice for the communities affected by this manmade disaster. I thank Governor Newsom but more than anyone I thank the community for standing for justice and never giving up," commented Assemblymember Garcia.

"This commitment of \$454 million offered in Governor Newsom's May Revise is an unassailable assurance that cleanup of the toxic waste and contamination Exide caused will actually happen. It is proof that our state budget is, in fact, a statement of our values in which environmental justice for communities of color is at the forefront of the conversation. No fewer than 100,000 people – from moms with newborns to infirm seniors and their caregivers – have been directly affected by the lead, arsenic and other toxic materials traced back to this site," said Assemblywoman Carrillo.

"Our communities are not a dumping ground," said Assemblymember Santiago. "DTSC failed to protect our communities and Trump's Administration further ignored them. For years we have fought tirelessly to deliver the necessary monies and accountability to clean up our neighborhoods and Governor Newsom's investment of \$454 million marks a huge win in our long battle to finally cleanup our communities. Our children have lived and played in Exide's toxic lead for far too long. It's time to heal from this decades-long environmental injustice."

The proposed \$454 million in funding for the Exide cleanup will allow for a full cleaning of the polluted site, as well as the most highly impacted homes surrounding the facility. The Exide plant in Vernon closed in 2015, following decades of contamination in Southeast Los Angeles.

The 58th Assembly District includes the cities of Montebello, Pico Rivera, Commerce, Bell Gardens, Downey, Norwalk, Bellflower, Cerritos, and Artesia.

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