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## Press Release

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### Landmark Department of Toxic Substances Control Reform Passed Almost \$1 Billion in Cleanup for Hazardous sites

(Sacramento) –Today Lawmakers passed SB 158, which reforms the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). SB 158 starts high-level actions to reset DTSC into a department that is more transparent, accountable, and more protective of public health. This bill implements recommendations of the Independent Review Panel that provided recommendations in 2017, including assuring adequate fiscal assurances to bring fiscal stability, creating a board to improve transparency and accountability, improving fiscal assurance requirements, and creating a modern hazardous waste management plan. This landmark trailer bill also includes \$500 million over the next 3 years for brownfield clean up and \$322.4 million for the cleanup of the community surrounding the Exide Technology Facility. Additionally, the Legislature recently passed AB 128 that included \$131.4 million for Exide Cleanup. In total, these two budget actions, ensures that no homes around the Exide facility will be left behind and every home will be cleaned up.

“Today we passed landmark DTSC reform that will ensure we have a department that truly prioritizes the health and well-being of low income communities of color who have been treated like wastelands for too long and give DTSC the appropriate fiscal resources to do their critical work long-term. This reform and the nearly \$1 billion for toxics clean up, begins to ensure that future generations of black and brown children are safe and NOT treated like they are disposable. These reforms fully reshape DTSC into a department that will prevent the next Exide and can oversee the management of hazardous waste in California in a transparent manner that fully protects all communities and public health, irrespective of our zip code or socioeconomic status,” said Assemblymember Cristina Garcia (D- Bell Gardens).

“My district and others have suffered because of DTSC’s inadequate permitting and cleanup oversight. This bill is a major first step in turning this department around to help the communities it is supposed to serve. We have allowed DTSC to operate poorly and without a strong vision for too long. This bill begins to create a more responsive, transparent, and accountable DTSC,” said Speaker Anthony Rendon (D- Lakewood).

“DTSC reform is long overdue because Exide polluted our communities for decades and we need DTSC to take action now to clean it up,” said Assembly Member Santiago “This reform package brings transparency and accountability to DTSC so we won’t have any more lapses in enforcement and oversight. Thank you to my colleague, Assembly Member Garcia, for leading with us to champion this effort to bring true reform to DTSC,” said Assemblymember Miguel Santiago (D-Los Angeles).

“This major reform to DTSC is long overdue. The health and safety of California residents must be our top priority. By increasing oversight and stabilizing funding, this reform bill will help the department crack down on polluters and hold them accountable,” said Senator Bob Wieckowski (D-Fremont).

“This reform package is a very good start in adding transparency and accountability to DTSC. Further, it provides public performance metrics so that we can evaluate these reforms,” said Assemblymember Bill Quirk (D-Hayward).

“Today’s landmark DTSC reform legislation is a great step in the right direction. Our communities deserve to have a clean environment and a healthy future, and we must do all we can to protect all Californians from corporate polluters that jeopardize these essential human rights. AB/SB158 makes critical investments that will help us continue the cleanup of areas impacted by Exide in my district. It also makes the necessary changes to help hold polluters accountable, empower community input and add more oversight to DTSC operations to help prevent these type of environmental catastrophes from happening again,” said Senator Lena Gonzalez (D- Long Beach).

“This bill, spearheaded by Assemblymember Garcia, has been a decade in the making and represents real progress. The legislature will have more oversight, there will be more transparency for the public and most importantly, this bill shows that the administration is willing to correct decade’s long issues with DTSC and make the environmental safety of Californians the priority it deserves to be,” said Assemblymember Richard Bloom (D- Santa Monica).

“DTSC allowed the Exide battery recycling plant to operate without proper oversight for decades, allowing this corporation to pollute and poison our communities with no consequence or remorse. DTSC had been negligent and irresponsible to the most vulnerable Californians, most of whom are working class Latinos. Most consequently, USC’s 2019 ‘Truth Fairy’ study shows that airborne lead from Exide was found in the baby teeth of children from East Los Angeles, Boyle Heights and Southeast LA. SB 158 aims at ensuring transparency and accountability. Too many lives have been impacted by the toxic environment within DTSC and we won't allow this to continue or allow another Exide to occur in the state of California,” said Assemblywoman Wendy Carrillo (D- East Los Angeles).

“The DTSC trailer bill is a first step to assure DTSC has the direction and tools to prioritize the health of frontline impacted communities, and minimize the impacts of toxic substance polluters. It also includes funding for the continued cleanup of the East Los Angeles communities surrounding the Exide Vernon battery site where for decades, Exide and other bad actors were allowed to engaged in criminal behavior which resulted in the worst environmental disaster and case of environmental racism in our state’s history. Now they walk away with no consequences. Our Government failed this community. We must do everything within our power to ensure DTSC prevents another Exide-level environmental disaster in our communities,” said Senator Maria Elena Durazo (D-East Los Angeles).

“This effort is a long time coming. When a polluting industry dumps dangerous and toxic chemicals into any community, we all pay a big price. Not only are there dramatic costs to the health and wellbeing of impacted communities, but too often the California taxpayers are on the hook for those impacts and cleanups. It’s time we make the DTSC hold these industries accountable and ensure they are paying their fair share,” said Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-Glendale).

“AB 158 starts with a fundamental premise that I teach my own kids – clean up your own mess. This bill helps ensure polluters are held accountable and pay their fair share, while also restructuring DTSC funding and the department itself to facilitate the type of investigations and enforcement necessary to prevent environmental disasters, like the one caused by Exide, from ever happening again in California,” said Assemblymember Tasha Boerner Horvath (D- San Diego).

“The passage of this trailer bill underscores the Legislature’s dedication to improving operations at the DTSC, which currently lacks the accountability, transparency, and fee structure necessary to carry out its mission: protecting public health and our environment from hazardous waste,” said Assembly Speaker Pro Tempore Kevin Mullin (D-South San Francisco).

“I want to congratulate Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia for her tenacity to deliver DTSC reform,” said Assemblywoman Luz Rivas (D-San Fernando Valley). “She has been laser focused on this matter and I applaud her for getting these changes across the finish line,” said Assemblymember Luz Rivas( D- San Fernando Valley).

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