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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Vernon City Council unanimously approves resolution calling on AQMD to issue a health advisory for Southeast L.A. County residents due to harmful arsenic and lead air emissions**

**Vernon, CA** – The five-member Vernon City Council today unanimously voted to approve a resolution strongly urging the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) to issue a health advisory for residents of Southeast Los Angeles County due to the potential health risk from elevated levels of arsenic and harmful lead air emissions discovered in the agency’s air monitoring surveys of a battery recycling facility based in Vernon.

Leonard Grossberg, Vernon Health and Environmental Control Director, told Vernon City Council members prior to their vote, “Ongoing air quality environmental issues have elevated the fear and concerns of Vernon residents and the 55,000 workers at Vernon’s 1,800-businesses. Environmental concerns have risen dramatically in the neighborhoods, communities and cities that are in close proximity to the City of Vernon.

“The growing air emissions fears and concerns held by residents and workers within the Southeast L.A. County area must be adequately addressed with a greater sense of urgency by the SCAQMD. Immediate health advisory information regarding exposure to lead and arsenic air emissions is warranted.

“The City of Vernon Health & Environmental Control Department continues to validate our commitment to strong environmental controls and continued protection of public health issues. The Vernon City Council expressed great concern over potential health effects from lead and arsenic emissions from Exide at its September 17, 2013 meeting.

“Although the SCAQMD has said they are issuing a Notice of Violation to Exide, we feel more steps can be taken to protect the health and lives of residents and workers in the City of Vernon as well as other potentially affected communities. Consequently, I am recommending that the City Council approve a resolution requesting the SCAQMD issue an Exide Technologies health advisory to South East Los Angeles County and any other areas that may be affected. By issuing a health advisory, potentially affected

residents and workers can be informed of the risks of lead emissions from Exide and the precautions people can take to protect themselves.”

Following the council members’ unanimous vote, Vernon Mayor W. Michael McCormick said, “The City of Vernon remains committed to helping AQMD and DTSC protect the public health and safety of our city’s 55,000 workers and 115-residents and the hundreds of thousands of residents in our nearby communities.

“Vernon is doing its part to make sure residents in Vernon and elsewhere remain safe. We believe the AQMD can do more to help residents fully understand their immediate and long-term health risks and what they can do to protect themselves and their families.

“A health advisory issued by AQMD would greatly help residents who want, and deserve, a clear answer to their primary question regarding AQMD’s lead and arsenic air emissions study on Exide’s facility: Is our air safe to breathe today?”

Mayor McCormick directed Vernon City Administrator Mark Whitworth to transmit the Council’s resolution to AQMD officials and send the resolution accompanied by a letter to the L.A. County Board of Supervisors and the city councils of the cities of Los Angeles, Commerce, Bell, Maywood and Huntington Park to seek their concurrence on the AQMD lead and arsenic air emissions issue and passage of similar resolutions calling for an AQMD health advisory in their cities and unincorporated areas.

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**Vernon was founded in 1905 to create jobs in California. Vernon’s 1,800 businesses create more than 105,000 jobs in the Los Angeles area – including 55,000 jobs within the city’s 5.2-mile boundary. The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation designated Vernon as California’s ‘Most Business Friendly City.’ Vernon generates more than \$330 million in state income and sales taxes, \$1.1 billion in taxable spending. Vernon’s businesses provide more than 4.4 billion in salaries and wages annually for workers in Los Angeles County. For more information, go to [www.cityofvernon.org](http://www.cityofvernon.org).**