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Household Battery Recycling Program Backed By 38 Take-Back Locations

ALHAMBRA, Calif., May 31, 2011 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- A pilot program to take-back used household batteries has been made possible by 38 San Gabriel Valley area businesses voluntarily serving as collection locations. Participating businesses display an identifying sticker in their windows and place a collection box in their stores where consumers can properly dispose of non-working batteries. The program is organized by the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) and funded by a \$395,966 grant from the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle).



"Many people come in to drop off batteries and then something catches their eye, and we gain a customer," said Larry Chaconas, manager of Huntington Pharmacy in San Marino. "Regular customers tell us that they appreciate what we are doing, and we increase their loyalty. By simply placing this box in our store we have provided a new customer service and our customers feel good about keeping toxins out of our landfills." The take-back locations range from grocery stores, camera stores, to hair salons and car washes throughout the San Gabriel Valley. Site locations and a complete list of batteries accepted are listed at www.sgvocog.org/batteryrecycling.

Household batteries were banned from trash disposal in 2006. All household batteries under 11 pounds, alkaline and rechargeable, can be recycled at the 38 take-back locations. Batteries accepted include standard AAA-D alkaline, and rechargeable batteries which come in five chemistries and can be found in many products including digital cameras, cordless phones, two-way radios, wireless keyboards, cordless power tools, and cell phones.

"The County of Los Angeles spends more than \$10 million per year to dispose of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW). We are looking for a paradigm shift in how hazardous products are managed," said Heidi Sanborn, Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC), a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting extended producer responsibility (EPR). "EPR shares the responsibility for end-of-life product management among all entities involved in the product chain, with the primary responsibility placed on the producers who make design and marketing decisions. The good news for batteries is the battery producers have recently agreed that they will start a national battery recycling program in 2013, and our project is identifying best practices that may be utilized nationally." The collection boxes are provided for the pilot project by the Call2Recycle® program which is a national battery stewardship organization

funded by battery producers. The program normally is for rechargeable batteries only, but this pilot program has expanded regular collection to include both alkaline and rechargeable batteries together. Call2Recycle® pays for the shipping and recycling.

"Call2Recycle® is committed to helping identify the most cost-effective ways to increase battery recycling in the United States," said Carl Smith, who heads the Call2Recycle program. "We saw this project as an opportunity to test partnerships with local government and retailers to identify what stores and advertising methods increased battery recycling the most. We have provided free collection boxes for rechargeable batteries for years, but we are trying to see how collecting all batteries will improve rechargeable collections." To obtain a free rechargeable battery recycling box or to learn more, go to www.call2recycle.org.

In addition to the pilot program take-back locations, residents may properly dispose of batteries at HHW round-up events throughout the County of Los Angeles. These events are jointly sponsored by the County of Los Angeles and the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County and funded by garbage rates. Visit the County of Los Angeles' HHW website at <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/hhw/> for a full list of products that can be properly disposed of at the round-ups and for a complete schedule of upcoming events.

For general information about EPR go to www.calpsc.org. For more information about CalRecycle go to www.calrecycle.ca.gov.