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Contact: Frank Mateljan
(213) 978-8340 (O)
(213) 479-5675 (M)

L.A. CITY ATTORNEY ROCKY DELGADILLO FILES CHARGES AGAINST SOUTH L.A. CHROME PLATING FACILITY LOCATED NEAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo today announced his Office's Environmental Justice and Protection Unit has filed criminal charges against, and alleged the violation of terms and conditions of probation for, a South Los Angeles chrome plating facility for its continued illegal disposal of hazardous waste at its facility located across the street from an elementary school - the fifth largest elementary school in the western United States.

Palace Plating, Inc., and its corporate officers Joan and Roger Pierce, as well as facility manager Jose Luis Tirado, were each charged with two counts of disposing hazardous waste, five counts of unlawful discharge into the city sewer and one count of public nuisance. If convicted, each individual could face up to one year in jail and/or a fine up to \$100,000 for each hazardous waste charge and six months in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine for each remaining count.

"For too long, families in this community have had to carry the heavy burden of industrial pollution," said Delgadillo. "The continued violations by this and other companies demonstrate the importance of our ongoing Environmental Justice efforts to safeguard against those who threaten our environment and place the health and safety of our children at risk."

"The facts are appalling. For years, I have worked with the City Attorney's office, AQMD, and other regulatory agencies in an effort to correct these continued violations and protect our community and the future of our children," added Councilwoman Jan Perry who represents the area. "I will continue to remain vigilant about this and other issues where environmental hazards threaten the livelihood and safety of our residents. This is fundamentally a health and quality of life issue which should concern us all."

Recent charges against Palace Plating originate from a routine inspection by the Bureau of Sanitation in November 2006. Based on their findings, a follow-up investigation and search warrant were executed by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), Bureau of Sanitation, and Los Angeles County Fire, Health Hazmat Division in July.

Inspectors found the facility, located at 710 E. 29th Street, had exceeded permissible levels of cadmium, chromium and free cyanide in the wastewater introduced into the nearby sewer system.

Investigators also discovered levels of tetrachloroethylene originating from an underground plume located underneath the facility, affecting the air quality of areas around 28th Street Elementary School located just across the street.

Palace Plating Inc. is currently on probation following a July 2006 conviction for illegally disposing hazardous waste and allowing hazardous waste levels of cadmium to remain. Parents of 28th Street Elementary have long claimed that conditions at the facility have created health problems for students.

Ongoing monitoring and prosecution of Palace Plating grew out of City Attorney Delgadillo's Chrome Platers Initiative, launched in October 2003, to inspect suspected industrial polluters and prosecute violators. Comprised of representatives including but not limited to the South Coast Air Quality Management District, DTSC, city and county Fire Departments, the state Air Resources Board, the Watershed Protection Division, the Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation and the Department of Building and Safety, the initiative has inspected 312 chrome plating sites. Violations found during those inspections have resulted in \$895,198 in fines and penalties.

Task force members re-inspect chronic violators to measure compliance rates and will refer violators to the City Attorney's Office for prosecution. The original prosecution of Palace Plating included on-site asthma screening and treatment for students through the Los Angeles Unified School District and Los Angeles County Health Department program as well as Breathmobiles provided by Dr. Craig Jones and County USC Hospital.

City Attorney Delgadillo's Environmental Justice and Protection Unit will also continue to work closely with AQMD to closely monitor and target industrial polluters located near schools.

Arrest for this case is scheduled for December 18 in Department 81 of the Los Angeles Superior Court.

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