

LORETTA SANCHEZ

46TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

WASHINGTON OFFICE
1211 LONGWORTH BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0546
(202) 225-2965
(202) 225-5859 FAX

DISTRICT OFFICE
12397 LEWIS STREET, SUITE 101
GARDEN GROVE, CA 92840-4695
(714) 621-0102
(714) 621-0401 FAX

E-mail:
Loretta@mail.house.gov

Website:
www.house.gov/sanchez



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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April 12, 2016

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Governor Brown,

I applaud last month's announcement of a proposed \$176.6 million funding plan to test and clean the contaminated areas surrounding the former Exide owned lead-acid battery recycling plant in the city of Vernon. I hope that your administration and the California legislature are able to work together in order to quickly dispatch the necessary experts and equipment to immediately start the clean-up process.

As you are aware, the lead contamination within the communities surrounding the former battery recycling plant has, unfortunately, been an ongoing situation for years. If it were not for the efforts of these communities to make their voices heard, the contamination in Vernon would never have received the necessary attention. Many community leaders have expressed their frustrations and believe their calls for help were sidelined. It is absolutely necessary that the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) communicate with these community leaders and provide a transparent clean-up process.

I was discouraged to discover that blood tests administered by the Department of Public Health had only been recently utilized to further identify areas which showed the highest levels of lead contamination. As you know, lead poisoning, especially in young children, can be absolutely devastating. Complications include failure of the kidneys and complications within the cardiovascular and reproductive systems. Moreover, lead contamination is linked to learning disabilities and neuropsychiatric disorders in children. Prior to the allowance of blood tests, the Los Angeles Times reported that the DTSC was unsuccessful in obtaining blood lead levels from state and county health agencies in order to better understand the spread of the contamination in the area.

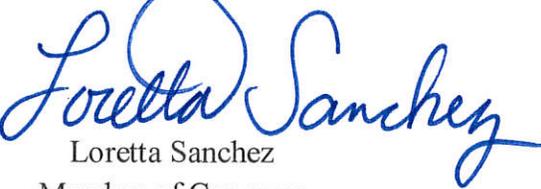
When regulators stop paying attention and corporations are allowed to skirt laws, the most vulnerable members of our society end up footing the bill. In this case it is the predominantly Mexican-American working-class citizens of Vernon and Southeast Los Angeles who are paying

with their long-term health. We can no longer tolerate any more Vernons, Flints, or Porter Ranches. The state of California is supposed to be a leader in accountability and we must put the well-being of our people and environment before anything else.

I would like to respectfully request information on why there was such a delay in responding to the contamination, what is being done to remedy the situation, and why it took so long to finally shut down the Exide recycling plant despite the many years of red flags. Additionally, I would like to request more information on what the state's plan is to improve the regulatory powers of the Department of Toxic Substances Control, in order to more effectively detect and deter future incidents.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to further discussions with you on this situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Loretta Sanchez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Loretta" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Sanchez".

Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress

CC: Director Barbara A. Lee
California Department of Toxic Substances Control