



COUNTY OF YOLO  
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Cooks Collision Settles Environmental Protection Lawsuit Brought by California District Attorneys Related to Disposal of Hazardous Auto Body Repair Waste**

**Woodland, CA – July 30, 2018** – Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig, along with 14 other California District Attorneys, announced today that a Sacramento County Superior Court judge has ordered Cooks Collision Inc. to pay \$1.525 million as part of a settlement of a civil environmental prosecution alleging the auto-repair company mishandled hazardous waste.

Cooks Collision currently owns and operates over 35 auto repair facilities throughout California. According to the District Attorneys' complaint, Cooks Collision illegally managed and disposed of hazardous waste generated at these facilities, including automotive-fluid products, batteries, and ignitable liquids. The parties' settlement resolves the allegations made in the District Attorneys' complaint.

"Cooks Collision produces a variety of harmful wastes that can damage our natural resources and communities when disposed of improperly," said District Attorney Jeff Reisig. "Those that generate hazardous wastes must be vigilant to ensure their wastes are managed and disposed of consistent with California law."

As part of the settlement, Cooks Collision must pay \$900,000 in civil penalties, pay \$325,000 to reimburse the costs of investigation, and spend \$150,000 on programs designed to ensure the company's future compliance with hazardous waste laws. As a term of the settlement, Cooks Collision will now have a full-time employee who will be responsible for its environmental compliance and training. Also as part of the settlement, Cooks Collision will allocate \$150,000 to a research project at California State University, Chico. Under the research project, faculty

and students will evaluate options for recycling by-products from the auto body repair process, and the potential for using plant-based alternatives to the petroleum-based paint strippers and solvents in current use.

The stipulated judgment resolves a case that began in 2013, when inspectors from the Sacramento County Environmental Management Department observed hazardous waste violations inside several Cooks Collision facilities. District Attorney investigators from several counties then conducted undercover inspections of Cooks Collision's trash containers, which revealed the illegal disposal of hazardous auto body sanding dust, sanding pads, automotive paints, clear coats, solvents, non-empty aerosols, and other hazardous substances used during the auto body repair process.

The case was brought by the District Attorney's offices of Alameda, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Los Angeles, Marin, Napa, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Ventura, and Yolo counties, where Cooks Collision's auto body repair shops are located. There are two Cooks Collision auto body shops in Davis. Cooks Collision cooperated with the District Attorneys' investigation and took steps to improve its compliance with the environmental laws brought to its attention by the prosecutors.

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