



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Northern Recycling Agrees to Settlement for Mismanagement  
Composting Facility That Led to Fires in Zamora**

**Woodland, CA – February 26, 2020** – The Yolo County District Attorney’s Office reached a settlement with Northern Recycling in a civil enforcement action for ongoing mismanagement of its green waste composting facility in Zamora. The case was investigated by the Yolo County Environmental Health Division and the Zamora Fire Protection District. Northern Recycling has a solid waste permit that allows it to store no more than 50,000 cubic yards of green waste on-site at any time. These agencies discovered that Northern Recycling repeatedly stored more green waste at its facility than was permitted despite receiving multiple prior warnings from Environmental Health in 2012, 2013, and 2014.

For example, in 2017, Environmental Health discovered that Northern Recycling stored about 100,000 cubic yards of waste at the facility - double the amount it was allowed to have by law. Northern Recycling was also notified by Environmental Health multiple times between 2009 and 2017 that it was failing to adequately control odors, litter, nuisances, and noise on-site. The agencies’ investigation further revealed that Northern Recycling used faulty thermometers in 2017 to monitor the temperature of green waste storage piles on-site. Heat is a natural byproduct of the composting process, which can cause waste piles to spontaneously combust or catch fire if their size and temperature are not properly monitored.

Northern Recycling’s storage of excessive green waste and its failure to monitor the internal temperatures of the waste piles resulted in multiple fires at the facility in September and October 2017. The post-fire investigation indicated that Northern Recycling was also not following certain fire access and response plan requirements designed to keep first responders safe. They failed to provide adequate fire lanes and notify the Fire District of previous fires at the facility.

The settlement was approved by Yolo County Superior Court Judge Stephen L. Mock on **February 14**, 2020. Northern Recycling admitted wrongdoing and will pay \$95,365.00 in civil penalties and investigative costs. Northern Recycling entered into an injunction requiring it to abide by the terms of its solid waste permit and its fire response and access plan. The company will forfeit an additional \$93,500.00 in penalties if it is found to be materially violating any term of the injunction.

In addition to paying penalties and costs, Northern Recycling will also annually donate \$35,000.00 of finished compost to the Yolo County Farm to Fork Program and \$17,500.00 of finished compost to Yolo County Community Gardens participating in the Earth Day Giveaway for the next five consecutive years. Northern Recycling will also create educational materials on appropriate green recycling practices and give these materials to the Environmental Health Division for its use in educating Yolo County residents and businesses.

Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig stated, “By failing to follow the rules, Northern Recycling created nuisances and caused fires that could have seriously affected neighboring communities. My office remains committed to prosecuting businesses operating for profit in Yolo County that have been given multiple opportunities to comply with the law, and have failed to do so. Our local agencies continue to enhance the environment in Yolo County, and we thank the Yolo County Environmental Health Division and the Zamora Fire Protection District for their thorough investigation of Northern Recycling’s business practices.”

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