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### EPA Reaches Agreement with Battery Recycling Company, Inc. of Arecibo, Puerto Rico To Reduce Lead Pollution

Release Date: 02/23/2012

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(New York, N.Y.) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reached a legal agreement with the **Battery Recycling** Company, Inc. requiring it to take multiple actions to reduce the spread of lead contamination from its **Arecibo**, Puerto Rico facility. As part of an ongoing investigation of the facility, the EPA identified violations of federal regulations governing the proper handling of hazardous materials. The agreement announced today requires the company to take immediate steps to address the environmental violations and prevent releases of lead and other pollutants from the site. The company will invest more than \$3 million in facility upgrades and will undertake three environmental projects to benefit the community. The **Battery Recycling** Company has agreed, at this time, to pay a \$112,500 penalty for alleged violations of the hazardous waste law. The EPA is working cooperatively with the Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board on making improvements at the facility that will benefit the **Arecibo** community.

Lead is a toxic metal that can have serious, long-term health consequences for adults and children. Even at low levels, lead can cause I.Q. deficiencies, reading and learning disabilities, impaired hearing, reduced attention spans, hyperactivity and other behavioral problems in children.

"Lead is a dangerous toxin that can affect a child's ability to learn. We need to do everything possible to protect the children of **Arecibo** from being exposed to lead. This agreement reached by the EPA and **Arecibo Battery Recycling** does just that. It will also help protect the health of the workers at the plant and all people living near the facility," said Judith A. Enck, the EPA Regional Administrator.

The EPA inspections identified significant violations of federal air, water and hazardous waste regulations. The air and water violations were addressed in previous EPA orders issued to the company. The agreement announced today addresses the hazardous waste violations under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

The **Battery Recycling** Company, Inc. is a lead smelter that recycles used motor vehicle batteries and produces approximately 60 tons of lead per day. Throughout 2010 and 2011, the EPA conducted a series of inspections of the facility to determine its compliance with federal laws and regulations. The facility was found to generate lead-contaminated dust during **battery** processing, lead smelting and refining operations, and the storage and handling of waste. Workers have also carried lead dust on their clothes and equipment into their cars and homes, putting their families and others at risk.


Under the agreement announced today, **Battery Recycling** will completely enclose the lead **recycling** processing areas and run all emissions through dust collection systems. The company will also finish building a new dust collection system to capture lead dust within the work area. Trucks and automobiles leaving the facility will be washed and inspected to reduce the spread of lead dust. Facility roads will be paved and pavements will be cleaned, in many cases, at least twice each day.

**Battery Recycling** has also agreed to fund the following local projects:

- Purchase of a vacuum sweeper vehicle to clean facility roadways of lead dust or other pollutants. It will improve the collection of dust and dirt and the proper disposal of the waste. The project is estimated to cost a

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minimum of \$180,000.

- Purchase special equipment to compress dust from collection storage bins into pellets for easier handling. The project is estimated to cost a minimum of \$150,000
- Provide assistance to local high schools in Puerto Rico to improve environmental education involving the safe handling and disposal of old chemicals. The project is estimated to cost a minimum of \$150,000

The order announced today is the latest in a series of actions the EPA has taken to protect people's health and the environment in **Arecibo**. Under previous agreements with the EPA, **Battery Recycling** improved existing employee changing areas, installed a decontamination station for vehicles entering and leaving facility processing areas, and trained employees to ensure that "clean" and "dirty" lockers and changing areas are kept separate and used in a way that minimizes contamination between the areas. **Battery Recycling** is now also required to follow a standard operating procedure manual for continuously monitoring compliance with previous orders.

To learn more about EPA's efforts to reduce lead risks, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/lead>.

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12-021

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