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NEWS RELEASE



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District Attorney Warns Against Price Gouging Following Los Angeles Fires

VENTURA, Calif. – As thousands of Los Angeles County residents search for new housing in the aftermath of the Palisades and Eaton Fires, the Ventura County District Attorney's Office urges the community to stay alert for potential price gouging of essential goods, services, and housing.

On January 7, 2025, Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency in Los Angeles County and Ventura County due to the significant destruction caused by the Palisades Fire. Under California Penal Code section 396, during a state of emergency it is unlawful for sellers to increase prices by more than 10% for essential items such as food, fuel, medical supplies, and lodging, unless justified by legitimate cost increases. Additionally, residents are protected against excessive rent hikes and unjust evictions during the emergency period. Violations of Penal Code section 396 are punishable by up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$10,000.

"Price gouging during an emergency is against the law and a vicious way of ripping off those who have already lost so much," said District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. "We strongly encourage anyone who suspects price gouging to report it immediately to local law enforcement for a thorough investigation."

Residents who encounter suspected price gouging are urged to contact the Ventura County District Attorney's Office by emailing DAOpricegouging@ventura.org.

When filing a report, please include the following information:

- Name, address, and phone number of the business or seller
- Details of the product or service in question
- The price of the product or service prior to January 7, 2025
- The price of the product or service (from the same seller) after January 7, 2025
- Additional details that may assist in the investigation
- Contact information for the reporting individual

Not all high prices qualify as price gouging. The law requires a "before" price and an "after" price for comparison. Newly listed properties, such as those posted on January 8, 2025, at high prices, do not meet this condition. Residents are encouraged to consider this distinction when reporting their concerns.

For more information on California price gouging laws, you can visit the [California Attorney General's website](#).