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For Immediate Release
November 22, 2019

PRESS RELEASE

DISTRICT ATTORNEY ALLISON HALEY ANNOUNCES SETTLEMENT IN CONSUMER PROTECTION CASE FOR PRICE GOUGING RELATED TO WILDFIRES

District Attorney Allison Haley announced today that PS Orangeco, Inc., the owner and operator of Public Storage self-storage rental facilities, agreed to a Stipulated Judgment, approved and ordered by the Superior Court, requiring the corporation to pay \$140,000 in civil penalties and costs for violating price gouging restrictions that applied following the October 2017 Northern California wildfires. The Judgment also includes an injunction prohibiting future violations. The civil enforcement action was brought jointly by the District Attorneys of Napa, Sonoma, and Solano Counties.

PS Orangeco cooperated in the investigation and resolution of this matter. The complaint alleged that PS Orangeco violated Penal Code section 396 in connection with the sale or offer for sale of storage services during the period covered by a declaration of emergency following the 2017 wildfires. When an emergency is declared, this law prohibits raising the price of many consumer goods and services – including food and drink, emergency supplies, rental housing, building materials, gasoline, transportation, and storage services - by more than 10% of the price charged immediately prior to the emergency declaration. PS Orangeco issued full refunds of the amounts charged in excess of 10 percent of the price it charged immediately prior to the wildfires, plus an additional \$10 courtesy credit, to all customers affected in the three counties. Any customer who believes they were overcharged and did not receive their refund and courtesy credit should contact Public Storage or the District Attorney's Office.

Deputy District Attorney Patrick Collins handled the case for Napa County. He explained: "This case is part of the ongoing efforts of our office to investigate and prosecute instances of price gouging following the devastating wildfires. Residents are encouraged to report cases of suspected price gouging to our office at daconsumer@countyofnapa.org or by calling (707) 253-4059."

Businesses should be aware that the restrictions under Penal Code section 396 currently remain in effect through December 31, 2019 by Executive Order of the Governor. That deadline may be extended by further order of the Governor or by local government agencies.

Any questions may be directed to Assistant District Attorney Paul Gero.