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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

PG Hotline Expanded to Cover Hurricane-Related Commodities



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today expanded Florida's Price Gouging Hotline to receive reports of extreme price increases on essential commodities needed to prepare for Hurricane Isaias. The expansion comes as Governor Ron DeSantis declares a state of emergency for counties along Florida's east coast. Florida's price gouging laws for this event only apply within the area of the declared state of emergency and only for commodities and services essential to preparing for or recovering from the storm event.

However, the price gouging laws remain in effect statewide under the emergency declaration in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in March for commodities that relate specifically to the health crisis. Another storm-related state of emergency also continues as a result of Hurricane Michael for 14 panhandle counties.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "It's important that Floridians take steps now to prepare for a potential strike by Hurricane Isaias and I'm expanding my Price Gouging Hotline to receive reports of extreme price increases on important items needed to be prepared. It's important for consumers to know that there are now multiple emergency declarations in Florida—including one for Isaias and one statewide for COVID-19.

"Essential commodities for each event may differ, but it is against the law for sellers to use an emergency to rip off Floridians, and we will work in real-time to ensure consumers can obtain these items at a fair price to protect their property and families. If you see potential price

gouging, please report it immediately so we can take swift action to stop any potentially unlawful activity."

During a storm-related declared state of emergency, state law prohibits excessive increases in the price of essential commodities, such as food, water, hotel rooms, ice, gasoline, lumber and equipment, needed as a direct result of the event. Anyone who suspects price gouging should report it to the Attorney General's Office by using the NO SCAM app or by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM. The Attorney General's NO SCAM app can be downloaded for free through Apple and Android stores by searching NO SCAM.

Preparedness tips can be found by downloading the Attorney General's Hurricane Preparedness Guide here.

For tips on reporting price gouging, click here.

For more information on price gouging, please click here.

For more information about price gouging associated with the statewide COVID-19 emergency declaration issued in March, click here.

Violators of the price gouging statute are subject to civil penalties of $1,000 per violation and up to a total of $25,000 for multiple violations committed in a single 24-hour period. In addition to the civil penalties for price gouging, state law criminalizes the sale of goods and services to the public without possession of a business tax receipt.