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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RENTAL PRICE GOUGING IN WILDFIRE AREAS: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF REAL ESTATE WARNS AGAINST IT

Department will investigate complaints against a real estate licensee involved in unlawful housing price gouging.

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Real Estate issued a warning against price gouging for rental housing for victims of this year’s California wildfire.

The Department is reminding licensees that price gouging is a criminal offense in counties where a state of emergency has been declared. The law on price gouging or taking advantage of consumers also applies to hotel and motel rates and to consumer food items and other goods and services.

Price gouging is punishable by imprisonment or a fine of not more than \$10,000, or by both the fine and imprisonment. Unlawful business practice actions can also be brought against licensees who violate the anti-price gouging law.

The Department will carefully investigate complaints of unlawful “price gouging” of rental housing by licensees in the wake of the ongoing wildfires in California and will take the appropriate disciplinary action when price gouging is found to have occurred.

To report illegal conduct by a real estate licensee, go the department’s website at www.dre.ca.gov and click on “consumers” and “file a complaint.”

To view Penal Code 396, which addresses price gouging in disaster zones, go to: <https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/penal-code/pen-sect-396.html>

The California Department of Real Estate (DRE) safeguards and promotes public interest in real estate matters through licensure, regulation, education and enforcement.