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Consumer Protection Settlement regarding Shell Gift and Fuel Rewards Cards

District Attorney Jeffrey S. Rosell today announced that Equilon Enterprises LLC, dba Shell Oil Products US (“Shell”), entered into a settlement to resolve consumer protection and false advertising violations related to Shell gift cards and fuel rewards cards. Under the terms of the stipulated judgment, Shell agreed to pay \$762,500 in civil penalties, costs, and restitution, and to injunctive provisions to ensure future compliance.

A task force composed of the Santa Cruz County District Attorney’s Office, along with District Attorneys from Alameda, Monterey, Napa, Sonoma, Santa Clara and Solano counties conducted the investigation and filed the action in Alameda County. The complaint alleged that Shell: (1) failed to adequately disclose that certain advertised discounts for using gift cards and fuel rewards cards could not be combined; (2) advertised discounts on gasoline when purchased by a gift card that Shell knew or should have known were not being honored by all stations; (3) failed to redeem gift cards with balances of less than \$10 for cash as required by California law; (4) failed to adequately disclose limitations to Shell’s rewards programs; and (5) falsely advertised that certain gift cards could “be used like cash,” when Shell knew or should have known some stations were charging customers the credit price for gasoline when purchasing with a gift card.

District Attorney Jeff Rosell said, “My office is committed to ensuring that California’s consumer protection and false advertising laws are followed, both to protect consumers and to create a level playing field for all businesses.”

Although denying liability, Shell and its counsel worked cooperatively to implement changes in processing transactions and add additional disclosures. The judgment includes an injunction that requires Shell to: implement new technology at stations to address technical limitations that prevented advertised discounts from being combined; more adequately disclose any limitations on advertised discounts; provide increased training materials to help Shell stations address the issues in the complaint; and more prominently notify consumers about their gift card redemption rights and where to call with questions or complaints about Shell gift cards or fuel rewards cards.