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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ONTARIO SMOG CHECK STATIONS' LICENSES SUSPENDED

Bureau of Automotive Repair alleges "clean piping" and "clean plugging" by JP Smog Test Only

ONTARIO – The owner of JP Smog Test Only at 1465 East Philadelphia St. in Ontario, and a Smog Check technician who works for him, have had their licenses suspended after investigators with the Bureau of Automotive Repair determined they were cheating the state's Smog Check inspection program.

Investigators with the bureau found numerous instances of "clean piping" and "clean plugging" by station owner Jean Pierre Bendezu and Smog Check technician Victor Antonio Recendez.

"Clean piping" is when a vehicle that would not pass a Smog Check inspection on its own or is not present for testing is fraudulently certified as passing. To accomplish this, a technician or other individual uses a clean exhaust sample from another vehicle that will pass a Smog Check while entering data for the vehicle for which the Smog Certificate is required.

"Clean plugging" consists of using another vehicle's properly functioning On Board Diagnostic (OBD II) system to generate passing diagnostic readings to illegally issue smog certificates to vehicles that are not in smog compliance and/or not present for testing.

"These activities are against the law," said Bureau Chief Sherry Mehl. "To make matters even worse, this kind of illegal activity has a negative impact on the quality of the air we breathe. When we find Smog Check station owners and technicians operating illegally, we will take swift action to stop them and shut them down."

At the request of the bureau, an Administrative Law Judge suspended Bendezu's Automotive Repair Dealer registration, his Smog Check Test Only station license, and Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license. The judge also suspended Recendez's Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license.

The bureau will now proceed with its efforts to permanently revoke the suspended licenses.

An administrative hearing will be held at a later date to address the violations found during the investigation. The Bureau has also submitted the results of its investigation to the San Bernardino County District Attorney's Office for criminal prosecution.

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The Department of Consumer Affairs promotes and protects the interests of California Consumers. Consumers who wish to file a complaint against an auto repair facility can contact the Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair at (800) 952-5210. Consumers can also file a complaint online at www.autorepair.ca.gov.