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8	BEFOR					
9	DEPARTMENT OF C FOR THE BUREAU OF A					
10	STATE OF CALIFORNIA					
11						
12	In the Matter of the Accusation Against: MAC COPAS, DBA SMOG DEPOT	Case No. 79/24-21182				
13	19030 Valley Blvd. Unit C Bloomington, CA 92316					
14	Mailing Address:	ACCUSATION				
15	9847 Whitewood Ct. Fontana, CA 92335					
16	Automotive Repair Dealer Registration No.					
17	ARD 304372 Smog Check, Test-Only, Station License No.					
18	TC 304372					
19	ROBERTO PEREZ GOMEZ					
20	9829 Feron Blvd. Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730					
21	Smog Check Inspector License No. EO					
22	643596					
	BRANDON ALEXANDER SORIANO					
2324	18335 Jakes Way, Apt. 201 Canyon Country, CA 91387					
25	Smog Check Inspector License No. EO 643670					
26						
27	and					
28						
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BRANDON G BAZAN 26663 Fleming St.

Highland, CA 92346

Smog Check Inspector License No. EO 643379,

Respondents.

PARTIES

- 1. Patrick Dorais (Complainant) brings this Accusation solely in his official capacity as the Chief of the Bureau of Automotive Repair (Bureau), Department of Consumer Affairs.
- 2. On or about November 30, 2022, the Bureau issued Automotive Repair Dealer Registration Number ARD 304372 to Mac Copas, dba Smog Depot (Respondent Copas). The Automotive Repair Dealer Registration was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on November 30, 2025, unless renewed.
- 3. On or about December 29, 2022, the Bureau issued Smog Check, Test-Only, Station License Number TC 304372 to Respondent Copas. The Smog Check, Test-Only, Station License was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on November 30, 2025, unless renewed. Respondent Copas' smog check station is certified as a STAR station. The STAR certification was suspended on October 15, 2024.
- 4. On or about March 25, 2022, the Bureau issued Smog Check Inspector License Number EO 643596 to Roberto Perez Gomez (Respondent Gomez). The Smog Check Inspector License was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on August 31, 2027, unless renewed.
- 5. On or about May 11, 2022, the Bureau issued Smog Check Inspector License Number EO 643670 to Brandon Alexander Soriano (Respondent Soriano). The Smog Check Inspector License was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on March 31, 2026, unless renewed.

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6. On or about November 8, 2021, the Bureau issued Smog Check Inspector License Number EO 643379 to Brandon G. Bazan (Respondent Bazan). The Smog Check Inspector License was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought herein and will expire on January 31, 2026, unless renewed.

JURISDICTION

- 7. Business and Professions Code ("BPC") section 9884.13 provides, in pertinent part, that the expiration of a valid registration shall not deprive the Director of jurisdiction to proceed with a disciplinary proceeding against an automotive repair dealer or to render a decision temporarily or permanently invalidating (suspending or revoking) a registration.
- 8. Health and Safety Code ("HSC") section 44002 provides, in pertinent part, that the Director has all the powers and authority granted under the Automotive Repair Act for enforcing the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program.
- 9. Section 44072.6 of the HSC provides, in pertinent part, that the expiration or suspension of a license by operation of law, or by order or decision of the Director of Consumer Affairs, or a court of law, or the voluntary surrender of the license shall not deprive the Director of jurisdiction to proceed with disciplinary action.

STATUTORY PROVISIONS

- 10. Section 9884.7 of the BPC states, in pertinent part:
- "(a) The director, where the automotive repair dealer cannot show there was a bona fide error, may refuse to validate, or may invalidate temporarily or permanently, the registration of an automotive repair dealer for any of the following acts or omissions related to the conduct of the business of the automotive repair dealer, which are done by the automotive repair dealer or any automotive technician, employee, partner, officer, or member of the automotive repair dealer.
 - (1) Making or authorizing in any manner or by any means whatever any statement written or oral which is untrue or misleading, and which is known, or which by the exercise of reasonable care should be known, to be untrue or misleading
 - (4) Any other conduct which constitutes fraud.

. . . .

- (6) Failure in any material respect to comply with the provisions of this chapter or regulations adopted pursuant to it."
- 11. Section 44012 of the HSC provides, in pertinent part, that tests at smog check stations shall be performed in accordance with procedures prescribed by the department.
- 12. Section 44015, subdivision (b), of the HSC provides that a certificate of compliance shall be issued if a vehicle meets the requirements of HSC section 40012.
- 13. Section 44032 of the HSC states, in pertinent part, that: (1) no person may perform tests or repairs of emission control devices or systems of motor vehicles required by the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program unless the person performing the test or repair is a licensed qualified smog check technician; and (2) all tests must be conducted in accordance with section 44012 (i.e. Motor Vehicle Inspection Program Requirements).
 - 14. Section 44059 of the HSC provides:

"The willful making of any false statement or entry with regard to a material matter in any oath, affidavit, certificate of compliance or noncompliance, or application form which is required by this chapter or Chapter 20.3 (commencing with Section 9880) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, constitutes perjury and is punishable as provided in the Penal Code."

15. Section 44072.2 of the HSC states, in pertinent part:

"The director may suspend, revoke, or take other disciplinary action against a license as provided in this article if the licensee, or any partner, officer, or director thereof, does any of the following:

- "(a) Violates any section of this chapter [the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program (Health and Saf. Code, sec. 44000, et seq.)] and the regulations adopted pursuant to it, which related to the licensed activities
 - "(c) Violates any of the regulations adopted by the director pursuant to this chapter.
- "(d) Commits any act involving dishonesty, fraud, or deceit whereby another is injured.

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16. Section 44072.10, subdivision (c), of the HSC states:

The department shall revoke the license of any smog check technician or station licensee who fraudulently certifies vehicles or participates in the fraudulent inspection of vehicles. A fraudulent inspection includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

- (1) Clean piping, clean plugging, clean glassing, clean tanking, or any other fraudulent inspection practice, as defined by the department.
 - (2) Tampering with a vehicle emission control system or test analyzer system.
- (3) Tampering with a vehicle in a manner that would cause the vehicle to falsely pass or falsely fail an inspection.
- (4) Intentional or willful violation of [the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program] or any regulation, standard, or procedure of the department implementing [the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program].
- 17. Section 44072.8 of the HSC states that when a license has been revoked or suspended following a hearing under this article, any additional license issued under this chapter in the name of the licensee may be likewise revoked or suspended by the director.

REGULATORY PROVISIONS

18. California Code of Regulations ("CCR"), title 16, section 3340.24, subdivision (c), states:

"The bureau may suspend or revoke the license of or pursue other legal action against a licensee, if the licensee falsely or fraudulently issues or obtains a certificate of compliance or a certificate of noncompliance."

19. California Code of Regulations ("CCR"), title 16, section 3340.30, subdivision (a), states in pertinent part:

"A licensed smog check inspector and/or repair technician shall comply with the following requirements at all times while licensed:

"(a) Inspect, test and repair vehicles, as applicable, in accordance with section 44012 of the Health and Safety Code, section 44035 of the Health and Safety Code, and section 3340.42 of this article.

. . . .

- 20. CCR, title 16, section 3340.35, subdivision (c), states that a licensed smog check station "shall issue a certificate of compliance or noncompliance to the owner or operator of any vehicle that has been inspected in accordance with the procedures specified in section 3340.42 of this article and has all the required emission control equipment and devices installed and functioning correctly."
- 21. CCR, title 16, section 3340.41, subdivision (b), provides: "No person shall enter into the emissions inspection system any access or qualification number other than as authorized by the bureau, nor in any way tamper with the emissions inspection system."
- 22. CCR, title 16, section 3340.42, sets forth specific emissions test methods and procedures which apply to all vehicles inspected in the State of California.

COST RECOVERY

23. Section 125.3, subdivision (a), of the BPC provides, in pertinent part, that a Board "may request the administrative law judge to direct a licentiate found to have committed violation or violations of the licensing act to pay a sum not to exceed the reasonable costs of the investigation and enforcement of the case."

SUMMARY OF OIS SMOG CHECK INSPECTION PROGRAM

- 24. Beginning March 9, 2015, California's Smog Check Program was updated to require the use of an On-Board Diagnostic Inspection System (OIS). OIS is the Smog Check equipment required in all areas of the State when inspecting most model-year 2000 and newer gasoline and hybrid vehicles and most 1998 and newer diesel vehicles. The system consists of a certified Data Acquisition Device (DAD), computer, bar code scanner, and printer. The DAD is an On Board Diagnostic (OBD) scan tool that, when requested by the California OIS software, retrieves OBD data from the vehicle. All OBD data that the vehicle indicates it supports is requested by the California OIS software and will be retrieved.
- 25. The DAD connects between the OIS computer and the vehicle's Diagnostic Link Connector (DLC) located in the vehicle's passenger compartment, which allows for the retrieval of information from the vehicle's on-board computer system. The California OIS software

requires a continuous Internet connection when performing a Smog Check inspection and the OI
software communicates with BAR's central database through the Internet connection. The bar
code scanner is used to input technician information, the vehicle's identification number (VIN),
and DMV renewal information. The printer provides a Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR)
containing inspection results for motorists and a Smog Check Certificate of Compliance number
for passing vehicles.
26. Data retrieved and recorded during an OIS smog check includes: the eVIN, which is
the digitally stored VIN programmed by the manufacturer into the vehicle's Powertrain Control

- 26. Data retrieved and recorded during an OIS smog check includes: the eVIN, which is the digitally stored VIN programmed by the manufacturer into the vehicle's Powertrain Control Module (PCM); the communication protocol, which is the manufacturer/vehicle specific language the PCM uses to Relay or communicate information. The communication protocol is programmed into the vehicle's on-board computer during manufacture and does not change.
- 27. Other data retrieved and recorded during an OIS smog check includes the number of Parameter Identifications (PIDs), which refers to the number of specific data values that the vehicle's PCM uses related to emissions controls. The specific data values associated with a vehicle's PIDs are also retrieved and recorded during an OIS smog check inspection. That data include things such as the vehicle's engine speed, throttle position, manifold absolute pressure and the engine's mass air flow readings throughout an inspection. Accordingly, the following types of data are recorded during an OIS smog check inspection:
 - Engine speed in revolutions per minute (RPM)
 - Throttle position as measured by a throttle position sensor (TPS) mounted onto the throttle shaft. Measured in a percentage of opening from 0% at idle and near or up to 100% at full throttle.
 - Manifold absolute pressure as measured by a manifold air pressure sensor (MAP)
 connected to an intake manifold source, measured in kilo pascals (kpa). Typical
 readings for a normally aspirated vehicle as follows: 0 kpa being absolute vacuum,
 25kpa to 45kpa at idle, 101 kpa at full throttle, same as atmospheric pressure at sea
 level.

- Mass air flow as measured by a mass air flow sensor (MAF) mounted in the engine's air intake tract. Measured in grams per second (gps).
- Ignition timing is set by the vehicle PCM based on engine speed and load, and is measured in degrees Before Top Dead Center (BTDC).
- 28. BAR has become aware of methods that some Smog Check stations and Smog Check inspectors use to fraudulently issue smog certificates to vehicles that will not pass a Smog Check test, or in some instances, are not even present during the time that the test is performed. One such method, which is known as "clean plugging", involves using another vehicle's properly functioning OBD II system, or another source such as a defeat device/simulator, to generate passing data readings or diagnostic information for the purpose of fraudulently issuing smog certificates to vehicles that are not in smog compliance and/or are not present for testing.
- 29. Defeat devices attempt to simulate engine operation during a Smog Check inspection by transmitting OBD II data to the VID that has been modified or replaced entirely for the purportedly inspected vehicle during the functional portion of the OIS inspection. The use of a defeat device/simulator during a Smog Check inspection constitutes clean plugging and is strictly prohibited. As described in more detail below, BAR is able to utilize the data retrieved and recorded during an OIS smog check to identify inspections in which a defeat device/simulator was used.
- 30. During an OIS Smog Check inspection, the vehicle is monitored and PID data readings are obtained while the engine is idling and also when the smog check inspector is prompted to increase the engine speed to a certain level and then maintain that speed for a period of time. In order for the engine speed to increase, the throttle must be opened to increase airflow through the engine. An increase in the throttle position also increases the engine speed as measured in RPM and results in a corresponding increase in the mass air flow rate (MAF) as well as a change in the manifold absolute pressure (MAP) and changes ignition timing advances.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

31. Clean plugging is apparent in cases where the data recorded during an OIS smog check shows that the engine speed as measured in RPM increases during the test but the throttle

many vehicles will have either MAP or MAF parameters rather than both.

Table 1

2	Test Date	Vehicle Certified & License No./VIN	Certificate No.	Test Details
3 4 5 6 7 8	August 29, 2024	2004 Nissan Frontier King Cab XE VIN # 1N6DD26T04C459548	UC545877C	Inspection performed by Respondent Gomez. Throttle position, MAF and ignition timing advance readings remained unchanged when engine RPM was increased off idle to approximately 1800.
9 10 11 12 13 14	August 31, 2024	2004 Honda Accord EX VIN # JHMCM56884C020821	UC677058C	Inspection performed by Respondent Gomez. Throttle position, MAF, MAP and ignition timing advance readings remained unchanged when engine RPM was increased off idle to approximately 2250.
15 16 17 18 19	August 31, 2024	2001 Infiniti QX4 VIN # JNRDR07X91W103278	UC677064C	Inspection performed by Respondent Gomez. Throttle position, MAF and ignition timing advance readings remained unchanged when engine RPM was increased off idle to approximately 1800.
20 21 22 23 24 25	September 3, 2024	2000 Nissan Pathfinder LE VIN # JN8AR07SXYW423733	UC677097C	Inspection performed by Respondent Gomez. Throttle position, MAF, MAP and ignition timing advance readings remained unchanged when engine RPM was increased off idle to approximately 1575.

ember 13, 2024 ember 23, 2024	2004 Audi S4 VIN # WAUPL58E94A243001 2000 Honda Accord LX VIN # JHMCG6652YC001609	UC962425C UE298705C	Inspection performed by Respondent Gomez. Throttle position, MAF and ignition timing advance readings remained unchanged when engine RPM was increased off idle to approximately 1550. Inspection performed by Respondent Bazan. Throttle position, MAP and ignition timing advance readings remained unchanged
ember 23, 2024	VIN#	UE298705C	Respondent Bazan. Throttle position, MAP and ignition timing advance readings
			when engine RPM was increased off idle to approximately 1700.
tober 18, 2024	2004 Honda S2000 VIN # JHMAP214X4T005481	UE710318C	Inspection performed by Respondent Soriano. Throttle position, MAP and ignition timing advance readings remained unchanged when engine RPM was increased off idle to approximately 1650.
tober 22, 2024	2000 Chevrolet Silverado C1500 VIN # 1GCEC14V2YZ162552	UE710343C	Inspection performed by Respondent Soriano. Throttle position, MAF, MAP and ignition timing advance readings remained unchanged when engine RPM was increased off idle to approximately 1750.
tober 30, 2024	2002 Chevrolet Z28 VIN # 2G1FP22G422133687	UE958633C	Inspection performed by Respondent Soriano. Throttle position, MAF, MAP and ignition timing advance readings remained unchanged when engine RPM was increased off idle to approximately 1550.
tc	ober 30, 2024	VIN#	VIN#

1	October 31, 2024	2005 Nissan Titan XE	UE958638C	Inspection performed by Respondent Soriano.	
2		VIN # 1N6AA06B45N559410		Throttle position, MAF and ignition timing	
3				advance readings remained unchanged	
4				when engine RPM was increased off idle to	
5				approximately 1550.	
6	Navamban 5, 2024	2002 Ch1-4 T-1	ID5(0024C	In an action manfarms of her	
7	November 5, 2024	2003 Chevrolet Tahoe K1500	JB560934C	Inspection performed by Respondent Soriano.	
8		VIN #		Throttle position, MAF, MAP and ignition timing	
9		1GNEK13Z43R110007		advance readings remained unchanged	
10				when engine RPM was increased off idle to	
11				approximately 1675.	
12					
13	FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE				
14	(Misleading Statements: Automotive Repair Dealer Registration)				
15	35. Respondent Copas has subjected his registration to discipline under BPC section				

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9884.7, subdivision (a)(1), in that Respondent made statements which were known to be untrue or misleading or, which by exercise of reasonable care should have been known to be untrue or misleading, when issuing electronic smog certificates of compliance for the vehicles set forth in Table 1, above, certifying that those vehicles were in compliance with applicable laws and regulations when, in fact, those vehicles had not been so inspected. Complainant refers to, and by this reference incorporates, the allegations contained in paragraphs 31 through 34, inclusive, as though set forth fully herein.

SECOND CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

(Fraud: Automotive Repair Dealer Registration)

36. Respondent Copas has subjected his registration to discipline under BPC section 9884.7, subdivision (a)(4), in that Respondent committed acts that constitute fraud by issuing electronic smog certificates of compliance for the vehicles set forth in Table 1, above, without performing bona fide inspections of the emission control devices and systems on those vehicles,

SEVENTH CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

(Violation of the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program: Inspector Licenses)

- 41. Respondent Gomez, Respondent Soriano and Respondent Bazan have subjected their smog check inspector licenses to discipline under HSC section 44072.2, subdivision (a), in that, with respect to the vehicles set forth in Table 1, above, Respondents violated the following sections of the HSC:
- a. **Section 44012**: Respondents failed to ensure that the onboard diagnostic system tests were performed on those vehicles in accordance with procedures prescribed by the department.
- b. **Section 44015, subdivision (b)**: Respondents issued electronic smog certificates of compliance without properly testing and inspecting the vehicles to determine if they were in compliance with section 44012 of the HSC.
- c. **Section 44032**: Respondents failed to perform tests of the onboard diagnostic systems on those vehicles in accordance with section 44012 of the HSC.
- d. Section 44059: Respondents willfully made false entries for the electronic smog certificates of compliance by certifying that those vehicles had been inspected as required when, in fact, they had not.

EIGHTH CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

(Violations of Regulations Pursuant to the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program: Inspector Licenses)

- 42. Respondent Gomez, Respondent Soriano and Respondent Bazan have subjected their smog check inspector licenses to discipline under HSC section 44072.2, subdivision (c), in that, with respect to the vehicles set forth in Table 1, above, Respondents violated the following sections of title 16 of the CCR:
- a. **Section 3340.24, subdivision (c)**: Respondents falsely or fraudulently issued electronic smog certificates of compliance without performing bona fide inspections and functional testing of the emission control devices and systems on those vehicles as required by HSC section 44012.

- b. **Section 3340.30, subdivision (a)**: Respondents failed to inspect and test those vehicles in accordance with HSC section 44012.
- c. **Section 3340.35, subdivision (c)**: Respondents issued electronic smog certificates of compliance even though those vehicles had not been inspected in accordance with section 3340.42 of the HSC.
- d. **Section 3340.41, subdivision (c)**: Respondents knowingly entered false information into the OIS about the vehicles being tested.
- e. **Section 3340.42**: Respondents failed to conduct the required smog tests and inspections on those vehicles in accordance with the Bureau's specifications

NINTH CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINE

(Dishonesty, Fraud or Deceit: Inspector Licenses)

43. Respondent Gomez, Respondent Soriano and Respondent Bazan have subjected their smog check inspector licenses to discipline under HSC section 44072.2, subdivision (d), in conjunction with HSC section 44072.10, subdivision (c), in that, with respect to the vehicles set forth in Table 1, above, Respondents committed acts involving dishonesty, fraud or deceit whereby another was injured by issuing electronic smog certificates of compliance for those vehicles without performing bona fide inspections and functional testing of the emission control devices and systems on those vehicles, thereby depriving the People of the State of California of the protection afforded by the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program. Complainant refers to, and by this reference incorporates, the allegations contained in paragraphs 31 through 34, inclusive, as though set forth fully herein.

OTHER MATTERS

- 44. Section 9884.7, subdivision (c), of the BPC states that "the director may suspend, revoke, or place on probation the registration for all places of business operated in this state by an automotive repair dealer upon a finding that the automotive repair dealer has, or is, engaged in a course of repeated and willful violations of this chapter, or regulations adopted pursuant to."
- 45. Section 44072.8 of the HSC states that when a license has been revoked or suspended following a hearing, any additional license issued under the Motor Vehicle Inspection Program