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8			
9	BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS		
10	FOR THE BUREAU OF AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR STATE OF CALIFORNIA		
11	STATE OF C.	ALIFUNIIA	
12			
13	In the Matter of the Accusation Against:	Case No. 79/23-4256	
14	ANTHONY MENDOZA ALVAREZ DBA		
15	ANT SMOG CHECK 147 E. Santa Clara St.	ACCUSATION	
16	San Jose, CA 95113		
17	Automotive Repair Dealer Registration No. ARD 281731		
18	Smog Check Repair Station License No. RC		
19	281731		
20			
21	JOSUE MATEOS MONTOYA 1968 S. King Road		
22	San Jose, CA 95122		
23	Smog Check Inspector License No. EO 631761		
24	Smog Check Repair Technician License No.		
25	EI 631761		
26	Respondents.		
27			
28			
		1 ANT SMOC CHECK, JOSHE MATEOS MONTOVA)	
	(ANTHUNY MENDUZA ALVAKEZ DBA	A ANT SMOG CHECK; JOSUE MATEOS MONTOYA) ACCUSATION	

PARTIES

- 1. Patrick Dorais (Complainant) brings this Accusation solely in his official capacity as the Chief of the Bureau of Automotive Repair, Department of Consumer Affairs.
- 2. On or about October 12, 2015, the Bureau of Automotive Repair issued Automotive Repair Dealer Registration Number ARD 281731 to Anthony Mendoza Alvarez doing business as ANT Smog Check (Respondent ANT). The Automotive Repair Dealer Registration was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought in this Accusation and will expire on October 31, 2024, unless renewed.
- 3. On or about March 9, 2020, the Bureau of Automotive Repair issued Smog Check Station License Number RC 281731 to Respondent ANT. The Smog Check Station License was in full force and effect at all times relevant to the charges brought in this Accusation and will expire on October 31, 2024, unless renewed.
- 4. On February 16, 2010, Advanced Emission Specialist (EA) Technician License No. 631761 was issued to Josue Mateos Montoya (Respondent Montoya). Pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 16, section 3340.28, subdivision (e), the license was renewed pursuant to Respondent Montoya's election as a Smog Check Inspector License No. EO 631761 and Smog Check Repair Technician License No. EI 631761, effective on August 14, 2012. Smog Check Inspector License No. EO 631761 expired July 31, 2023, and has not been renewed. Smog Check Repair Technician License No. EI 631761 expired on July 31, 2022, and has not been renewed.

JURISDICTION

- 5. This Accusation is brought before the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs (Director) for the Bureau of Automotive Repair, under the authority of the following laws.
 - 6. Business and Professions Code (Code) section 118, subdivision (b), states:

"The suspension, expiration, or forfeiture by operation of law of a license issued by a board in the department, or its suspension, forfeiture, or cancellation by order of the board or by order of a court of law, or its surrender without the written consent of the board, shall not, during any period in which it may be renewed, restored, reissued, or reinstated, deprive the board of its authority to institute or continue a disciplinary proceeding against the licensee upon any ground

provided by law or to enter an order suspending or revoking the license or otherwise taking disciplinary action against the licensee on any such ground."

7. Code section 9882, subdivision (a), states in part:

"There is in the Department of Consumer Affairs a Bureau of Automotive Repair under the supervision and control of the director. The duty of enforcing and administering this chapter is vested in the chief who is responsible to the director. The director may adopt and enforce those rules and regulations that he or she determines are reasonably necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter and declaring the policy of the Bureau, including a system for the issuance of citations for violations of this chapter as specified in Section 125.9."

8. Code section 9884.13 states:

"The expiration of a valid registration shall not deprive the director or chief of jurisdiction to proceed with any investigation or disciplinary proceeding against an automotive repair dealer or to render a decision invalidating a registration temporarily or permanently."

9. Code section 9884.22, subdivision (a), states:

"Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the director may revoke, suspend, or deny at any time any registration required by this article on any of the grounds for disciplinary action provided in this article. The proceedings under this article shall be conducted in accordance with Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, and the director shall have all the powers granted therein."

10. Health and Safety Code section 44002 states:

"The department shall have the sole and exclusive authority within the state for developing and implementing the motor vehicle inspection program in accordance with this chapter.

"For the purposes of administration and enforcement of this chapter, the department, and the director and officers and employees thereof, shall have all the powers and authority granted under Division 1 (commencing with Section 1) and Division 1.5 (commencing with Section 475) and Chapter 20.3 (commencing with Section 9880) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code and under Chapter 33 (commencing with Section 3300) of Title 16 of the California Code

of Regulations. Inspections and repairs performed pursuant to this chapter, in addition to meeting the specific requirements imposed by this chapter, shall also comply with all requirements imposed pursuant to Division 1 (commencing with Section 1) and Division 1.5 (commencing with Section 475) and Chapter 20.3 (commencing with Section 9880) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code and Chapter 33 (commencing with Section 3300) of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations."

11. Health and Safety Code section 44072 states:

"Any license issued under this chapter and the regulations adopted pursuant to it may be suspended or revoked by the director. The director may refuse to issue a license to any applicant for the reasons set forth in Section 44072.1. The proceedings under this article shall be conducted in accordance with Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code, and the director shall have all the powers granted therein."

12. Health and Safety Code section 44072.6 states:

"The expiration or suspension of a license by operation of law or by order or decision of the director or a court of law, or the voluntary surrender of a license by a licensee shall not deprive the director of jurisdiction to proceed with any investigation of, or action or disciplinary proceedings against, the licensee, or to render a decision suspending or revoking the license."

STATUTORY PROVISIONS

- 13. Section 9884.7 of the Code states, in pertinent part:
- (a) The director, if the automotive repair dealer cannot show there was a bona fide error, may deny, suspend, revoke, or place on probation 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.

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(4) Any other conduct that constitutes fraud.

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1	22. California Code of Regulations, title 16, section 3340.35, subdivision (c), states:	
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3	(c) A licensed 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. The	
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5	following conditions shall apply:	
6 7	(1) Customers shall be charged the same price for certificates as that paid by the licensed station; and	
	(2) Sales tax shall not be assessed on the price of certificates.	
8 9	23. California Code of Regulations, title 16, section 3340.41, subdivision (c), states:	
10		
11	(c) No person shall enter any vehicle identification information or emission	
12	control system identification data for any vehicle other than the one being tested into the EIS or OIS. Nor shall any person enter into the EIS or OIS any false information about the vehicle being tested.	
13		
14	(h) No licensed station shall have in the approved testing area at any time any	
15 16	electronic device or software capable of simulating the OBD data stream from a vehicle o manipulating OBD VIN, calibration identification, calibration verification number, MIL-status, readiness, or diagnostic trouble codes collected from a vehicle during a Smog Chec	
17	Inspection.	
18	24. California Code of Regulations, title 16, section 3373, states:	
19	No automotive repair dealer or individual in charge shall, in filling out an estimate, invoice, or work order, or record required to be maintained by section	
20	3340.15(f) of this chapter, withhold therefrom or insert therein any statement or information which will cause any such document to be false or misleading, or where	
21	the tendency or effect thereby would be to mislead or deceive customers, prospective customers, or the public.	
22		
23	<u>COST RECOVERY</u>	
24	25. Business and Professions Code section 125.3, subdivision (a), states:	
25	"Except as otherwise provided by law, in any order issued in resolution of a disciplinary	
26	proceeding before any board within the department or before the Osteopathic Medical Board	
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28	upon request of the entity bringing the proceedings, the administrative law judge may direct a	

licentiate found to have committed a 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."

SMOG CHECK PROGRAM

- 26. Beginning March 9, 2015, California's Smog Check Program requires smog inspectors and stations to use a functional computer test during smog inspections for most model year 2000 and newer gasoline and hybrid vehicles, and most 1998 and newer diesel vehicles. This test requires using a cable to connect the station's inspection system to the onboard diagnostic computer system of vehicle being tested. The inspection system then retrieves information from the vehicle's computer which is sent to the Bureau's vehicle information database. Some of this information includes:
 - Engine speed in revolutions per minute (RPM)
 - Throttle position measured by a throttle position sensor mounted onto the throttle shaft.
 Throttle position is measured in a percentage of opening ranging from near 0% at idle to near or 100% at full throttle.
 - Manifold absolute pressure (MAP) measured in kilo pascals (kpa) by a manifold air
 pressure sensor connected to an intake manifold source. Typical readings for a normally
 aspirated vehicle are 25-45 kpa at idle and 101 kpa at full throttle.
 - Mass air flow (MAF) measured in grams per second (gps) by a mass air flow sensor mounted in the engine's air intake tract.
- 27. During normal engine operation at idle, engine speed is relatively steady. At idle, the throttle position is steady at or near 0%, and the MAP and MAF readings are also steady. To increase engine speed, the throttle is opened. Opening the throttle increases the engine RPM, and also results in a corresponding increase in MAF and a change in MAP.
- 28. Defeat devices attempt to simulate engine operation during a Smog Check inspection by transmitting OBD II data to the VID which 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 during a Smog Check inspection is clean plugging and is strictly prohibited.

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29. Some smog check stations and inspectors fraudulently issue smog certificates to vehicles that may not pass a smog check test or may not even be present during the test. One method to fraudulently issue certificates is "clean plugging," which is using another vehicle or another source, such as defeat devices, 1 to generate passing data readings or diagnostic information for the station's inspection system.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

CLEAN PLUGS

30. During the course of a Bureau Representative's (BR) duties, BR accessed the VID and produced copies of the Smog Check Vehicle Inspection Reports, BAR OIS Test Details, and Certificate Sales relating to ten vehicles tested at ANT Smog. BR obtained the RPM, throttle position, MAP, and MAF readings for each inspection. The data transmitted during 10 of these inspections showed that the throttle position, MAP, and MAF readings remained fixed after the RPM increased, which is not characteristic or expected for normal engine operation. Thus, the review showed a pattern of vehicles being certified with engine operating parameters not corresponding to normal engine operation, confirming the vehicles receiving smog certificates were not tested during the OBD II functional test, which constitutes clean plugging. At least ten Smog Check Certificates of Compliance were fraudulently issued to vehicles. The details are set forth below.

Clean Plug #1

31. On January 13, 2023, Respondent Montoya issued a smog check certificate of compliance for a 2007 Honda Accord LX, VIN ending 2703. At the beginning of the smog check, the engine speed was steady at around 675 RPM, the throttle was fixed at 14.1% opening, the MAP was fixed at 28 kpa, and the MAF was fixed at 2.98gps. After the engine speed was accelerated and held steady at around 1650 RPM, the throttle remained fixed at 14.1% opening, the MAP remained fixed at 28 kpa, and the MAF remained fixed at 2.98 gps.

¹ A defeat device is an outside entity such as a computer that generates false readings to "defeat" a smog check test.

32. On January 13, 2023, Respondent Montoya issued a smog check certificate of compliance for a 2000 Nissan Frontier Crew Cab XE, VIN ending 4065. At the beginning of the smog check, the engine speed was steady at around 625 RPM, the throttle was fixed at 0% opening, the MAP was fixed at 94 kpa, and the MAF was fixed at 6.37 gps. After the engine speed was accelerated and held steady at around 2175 RPM, the throttle remained fixed at 0% opening, the MAP remained fixed at 94 kpa, and the MAF remained fixed at 6.37 gps.

Clean Plug #3

33. On February 8, 2023, Respondent Montoya issued a smog check certificate of compliance for a 2007 Honda Accord EX, VIN ending 4776. At the beginning of the smog check, the engine speed was steady at around 675 RPM, the throttle was fixed at 14.9% opening, the MAP was fixed at 27 kpa, and the MAF was fixed at 3.01 gps. After the engine speed was accelerated and held steady at around 1800 RPM, the throttle remained fixed at 14.9% opening, the MAP remained fixed at 27 kpa, and the MAF remained fixed at 3.01 gps.

Clean Plug #4

34. On February 11, 2023, Respondent Montoya issued a smog check certificate of compliance for a 2004 Honda Accord LX, VIN ending 6078. At the beginning of the smog check, the engine speed was steady at around 625 RPM, the throttle was fixed at 9.4% opening, the MAP was fixed at 27 kpa, and the MAF was fixed at 3.2 gps. After the engine speed was accelerated and held steady at around 1750 RPM, the throttle remained fixed at 9.4% opening, the MAP remained fixed at 27 kpa, and the MAF remained fixed at 3.2 gps.

Clean Plug #5

35. On February 15, 2023, Respondent Montoya issued a smog check certificate of compliance for a 2004 Honda Accord LX, VIN ending 6200. At the beginning of the smog check, the engine speed was steady at around 625 RPM, the throttle was fixed at 9.8% opening, the MAP was fixed at 26 kpa, and the MAF was fixed at 2.82 gps. After the engine speed was accelerated and held steady at around 2025 RPM, the throttle remained fixed at 9.8% opening, the MAP remained fixed at 26 kpa, and the MAF remained fixed at 2.82 gps.

36. On February 23, 2023, Respondent Montoya issued a smog check certificate of compliance for a 2006 Mitsubishi Lancer ES, VIN ending 6359. At the beginning of the smog check, the engine speed was steady at around 700 RPM, the throttle was fixed at 0% opening, the MAP was fixed at 31 kpa, and the MAF was fixed at 2.9 gps. After the engine speed was accelerated and held steady at around 1850 RPM, the throttle remained fixed at 0% opening, the MAP remained fixed at 31 kpa, and the MAF remained fixed at 2.9 gps.

Clean Plug #7

37. On March 1, 2023, Respondent Montoya issued a smog check certificate of compliance for a 2003 Honda Accord EX, VIN ending 0918. At the beginning of the smog check, the engine speed was steady at around 700 RPM, the throttle was fixed at 9.4% opening, the MAP was fixed at 29 kpa, and the MAF was fixed at 2.25 gps. After the engine speed was accelerated and held steady at around 1460 RPM, the throttle remained fixed at 9.4% opening, the MAP remained fixed at 29 kpa, and the MAF remained fixed at 2.25 gps.

Clean Plug #8

38. On March 6, 2023, Respondent Montoya issued a smog check certificate of compliance for a 2006 Honda Accord LX, VIN ending 6386. At the beginning of the smog check, the engine speed was steady at around 800 RPM, the throttle was fixed at 14.1% opening, the MAP was fixed at 32 kpa, and the MAF was fixed at 3.13 gps. After the engine speed was accelerated and held steady at around 1525 RPM, the throttle remained fixed at 14.1% opening, the MAP remained fixed at 32 kpa, and the MAF remained fixed at 3.13 gps.

Clean Plug #9

39. March 6, 2023, Respondent Montoya issued a smog check certificate of compliance for a 2004 Cadillac Escalade Luxury, VIN ending 8875. At the beginning of the smog check, the engine speed was steady at around 550 RPM, the throttle was fixed at 5.9% opening, the MAP was fixed at 39 kpa, and the MAF was fixed at 7.51 gps. After the engine speed was accelerated and held steady at around 1475 RPM, the throttle remained fixed at 5.9% opening, the MAP remained fixed at 39 kpa, and the MAF remained fixed at 7.51 gps.

OTHER MATTERS

- 49. Under Business and Professions Code section 9884.7, subdivision (c), the director may suspend, revoke, or place on probation the registration for all places of business operated in this state by Respondent ANT Smog upon a finding that it has or is engaged in a course of repeated and willful violations of the laws and regulations pertaining to an automotive repair dealer.
- 50. Under Health & Safety Code section 44072.8, if the smog check repair station license issued to Respondent ANT Smog is revoked or suspended, any additional license issued under division 26, chapter 5, part 5 of the Health and Safety Code in the name of the licensee also may be revoked or suspended by the Director.
- 51. Under Health & Safety Code section 44072.8, if Respondent Montoya's smog check inspector license and smog check repair technician license is revoked or suspended, any additional license issued under division 26, chapter 5, part 5 of the Health and Safety Code in the name of the licensee also may be revoked or suspended by the Director.

DISCIPLINARY CONSIDERATIONS

52. On April 16, 2018, in a prior disciplinary action titled "In the Matter of Accusation Against Josue Mateos Montoya, dba San Jose Smog Check, Josue Mateos Montoya, and Douglas Allen Nielson" Case No. 79/15-2746, the Bureau issued a Decision and Order revoking the Automotive Repair Registration License No. ARD 270981, and Smog Check Station License No. RC 270981, issued to Josue Mateos Montoya doing business as San Jose Smog Check (San Jose Smog), located at 147 E Santa Clara St, San Jose, CA 95113. San Jose Smog and Douglas Allen Nielson were jointly and severally liable for paying the Bureau's costs of investigation and enforcement in the amount of \$8,821.58. The Bureau has not received any payment to date.

PRAYER

WHEREFORE, Complainant requests that a hearing be held on the matters alleged in this Accusation, and that following the hearing, the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs issue a decision: