



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Office of the Attorney General

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For Immediate Release

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Price Freeze Still in Effect for the CNMI

Office of the Attorney General, Saipan – As Typhoon Hagibis approaches the CNMI, the Office of the Attorney General reminds all retailers that the Declaration of Price Freeze signed by Governor Ralph DLG. Torres on October 27, 2018 remains in effect. Governor Ralph DLG. Torres issued a Renewal of Declaration of Major Disaster and State of Significant Emergency on September 20, 2019, extending the price freeze for the Northern Mariana Islands for an additional thirty days. The price freeze is in effect until rescinded, or until the declaration of emergency or disaster are terminated, whichever occurs first.

The Consumer Protection Act makes it unlawful for businesses to engage in price gouging. Price gouging occurs when a business increases prices based solely on a shortage of goods caused by a natural disaster or any other emergency. The Office of the Attorney General will prosecute, both criminally and civilly, any business that engages in price gouging. A person or business found to be in violation of the Consumer Disaster Price Freeze Act can be prosecuted criminally or civilly, and can face up to a \$10,000 fine and up to one year in jail for each violation.

The price of the following items are frozen:

1. Gasoline, kerosene, diesel fuel, natural gas, and all other chemical fuels, whether in gaseous, liquid, or solid form;
2. All foods and foodstuffs, including water, bottled water, beverages, and ice;
3. All clothing;
4. Flashlights, lamps, lanterns, candles, light bulbs, and other means of illumination;
5. Generators, cables, wires, electrical batteries of every sort, and similar equipment for the generation and/or transmission of electrical power;
6. All appliances used in the storage and/or preparation of food, including, but not limited to, stoves, barbecue grilles, ovens, refrigerators, and coolers;
7. Tools typically used for construction, ground clearing, or home repairs, whether electrically powered, chemically powered, or manual, including, but not limited to, saws, machetes, hammers, drills, shovels, rakes, and brooms.
8. All bedding items, including pillows, futons and blankets.
9. Housing rentals to include apartments and condos.

If you have information about price gouging, you should submit a written complaint to the Office of the Attorney General, along with copies of all receipts, invoices, or other documents associated with the complained-of transaction. Make sure you keep your original documents for your own records.

Complaint forms may be obtained at www.cnmioag.org under the Consumer Protection section or in person at the Civil Division on Capitol Hill from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, or via email by sending a request to consumer_counsel@cnmioag.org. Complaints should be hand delivered to the Civil Division on Capitol Hill or submitted via email.

Inquiries regarding consumer protection complaints should be directed to Assistant Attorney General Michele Harris at consumer_counsel@cnmioag.org or (670) 237-7500.

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