

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For More Information, contact:

Mike Lewis (334) 353-2199

Joy Patterson (334) 242-7491

Claire Haynes (334) 242-7351

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AG LUTHER STRANGE WARNS AGAINST PRICE GOUGING WITH ALL ALABAMA COUNTIES UNDER STATE OF EMERGENCY

(MONTGOMERY) – With the potential for ice, snow, sleet and freezing rain affecting many areas of Alabama beginning Wednesday, Attorney General Luther Strange warns our citizens to be on guard against those who might exploit bad weather for illegal profit.

As a State of Emergency is officially declared for every county of Alabama, the state's price gouging law now is in effect throughout the state.

The Governor's proclamation of emergency states that "the current predictions of the National Weather Service demonstrate the potential for the State of Alabama to be severely affected by ice, snow, sleet, freezing rain as well as subfreezing temperatures beginning February 25, 2015 and continuing."

"I urge our citizens to be cautious of those who would prey upon them through crimes such as price gouging and home repair fraud," said Attorney General Strange. "Furthermore, I warn that anyone who seeks to take advantage of the public will be held accountable."

Alabama's price gouging law comes into effect when the Governor declares a State of Emergency, and it prohibits the "unconscionable pricing" of items for sale or rent. Although what constitutes an unconscionable price is not specifically set forth in state law, a price that is 25 percent or more above the average price charged in the same area within the last 30 days--unless the increase can be attributed to a reasonable cost--is a prima facie case of unconscionable pricing. The penalty is a fine of up to \$1,000 per violation, and those determined to have willfully and continuously violated this law may be prohibited from doing business in Alabama.

Attorney General Strange cautions consumers to be on guard against possible illegal price gouging when buying food, generators and other supplies. Consumers and officials can report any problems of alleged fraud or illegal price gouging to the Attorney General's Office of Consumer Protection by calling toll-free 1-800-392-5658, by writing to 501 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama, 36130, or through the Attorney General's website at www.ago.alabama.gov.

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501 Washington Avenue • Montgomery, AL 36104 • (334) 242-7300
www.ago.state.al.us

