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# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Van Nuys Smog Check Station Shut Down**

*Bureau of Automotive Repair alleges "clean piping"*

VAN NUYS – The California Department of Consumer Affairs Bureau of Automotive Repair (Bureau) has shut down Smog for Less Test Only and suspended the licenses of the station owner and three technicians after state investigators discovered multiple instances of “clean piping,” the illegal practice of sneaking cars past the mandatory state smog check.

“While the vast majority of Smog Check technicians are honest, hardworking employees, there are some shops or technicians who attempt to defraud or endanger the public,” said Bureau Chief Sherry Mehl. “This latest shut-down is part of our mission to protect California consumers from illegal practices and put the perpetrators out of business.”

“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.

Administrative Law Judge David B. Rosenman granted BAR’s request for Interim Suspension Orders (ISO) to immediately suspend the Automotive Repair Dealer registration and Smog Check Test Only Station license, and Advanced Emission Specialist Technician licenses of Sergio Gonzalez, owner of Smog for Less Test Only, 7300 Van Nuys Blvd. #4, in Van Nuys, California. The Advanced Emission Specialist Technician licenses were also suspended for Ivan Mejia, Adrian Alejandro Calvillo, and Pedro Gonzalez at the same location.

The Bureau sought the suspension orders to immediately shut down Smog for Less Test Only and prevent the men involved from being able to work as licensed Smog Check technicians while the

Bureau proceeds with its enforcement case. The Bureau is seeking to permanently revoke all the suspended licenses.

An administrative hearing will be held at a later date to address the violations found during the investigation. The case has also been submitted to the Los Angeles County District Attorney for criminal prosecution. "Auto pollution is a threat to public health," said DCA Acting Director Brian Stiger. "The Bureau will continue to prosecute smog check station operators and technicians who defraud and endanger the public by keeping polluting cars on the road."

The Bureau of Automotive Repair, within the California Department of Consumer Services, has 12 field offices in California that protect consumers from unlawful automotive services. The Bureau licenses more than 34,000 auto repair dealers in California and investigates complaints from the public. Last year, the Bureau handled nearly 15,000 consumer complaints and returned millions of dollars to consumers through direct refunds, rework of the vehicle, or billing adjustment.

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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](http://www.autorepair.ca.gov).*