



March 17, 2009

***** CONSUMER ALERT ***** CONSUMER ALERT *******MADIGAN WARNS CONSUMERS TO
BEWARE OF STIMULUS SCAMS**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today warned consumers to be on the look out for "stimulus scams" claiming to help consumers cash in on a piece of President Barack Obama's stimulus plan.

"In a time when we are all watching our wallets, it is important consumers remain vigilant," Madigan said. "No matter how authentic these solicitations may seem, they are more likely than not a scam. I strongly encourage consumers to contact my Consumer Fraud Hotline if they have any questions or concerns."

Madigan also recently filed a complaint against a Frankfort, Ill., advertising firm for allegedly airing deceptive commercials that falsely claim consumers wouldn't pay sales tax on automobile purchases as part of President Obama's stimulus package. Madigan said these types of scams are likely to rise throughout the state. She encouraged consumers to report any suspect programs or advertising to her Consumer Fraud Bureau.

In addition, the Attorney General cited recent federal reports of consumers receiving e-mails, some from supposed government agencies, asking for bank account or personal information so that the operators can allegedly deposit consumers' share of the stimulus directly in into their bank accounts. Instead, the con artists draw off the consumers' accounts and disappear, leaving the consumer with nothing. Some e-mail scams don't ask for information, but provide links to information about qualifying for funds. These links can result in the downloading of malicious software or spyware used to perpetrate identity theft.

"Unfortunately, scam artists will try to take advantage of people when they are most desperate for legitimate help," Madigan said. "I urge consumers to be extremely cautious if they are approached by anyone claiming to have access to federal stimulus funding because it likely will be a scam."

Consumers who believe they have been the victim of consumer fraud can download a complaint form at www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov/consumers or call the Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotline at one of the following numbers:

Chicago 1-800-386-5438

Springfield 1-800-243-0618

Carbondale 1-800-243-0607

Spanish-language Hotline: 1-866-310-8398

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