



July 24, 2009

MADIGAN: BEWARE OF 'CASH FOR CLUNKERS' CON***Attorney General Notes Rise in Scams Surrounding Federal Auto Trade-In Credit Program***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today warned consumers to beware of identity-theft scams related to a new program operated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that is designed to help consumers buy more environmentally-friendly vehicles.

Before this program even officially launches, we're already seeing scams pop up online, trying to falsely convince consumers that they must first pre-register and provide their Social Security numbers and other identifying information in order to participate," Madigan said. "That is absolutely not true. Consumers don't need to register or provide any personal information to an outside source before taking advantage of the trade-in credit with a qualified auto dealer."

The program, known as the Car Allowance Rebate System (CARS), offers \$3,500 or \$4,500 credits through auto dealers to consumers who trade in less fuel-efficient cars and purchase or lease a new vehicle. The \$1 billion initiative is designed to help boost auto sales and put more fuel-efficient cars on the nation's roads.

Madigan said unofficial Web sites have begun to appear online, using similarly named URLs and names, and falsely stating that consumers must first register for the program and asking for consumers' personal information such as a Social Security number or home address. Other sites claim to connect consumers with authorized auto dealers in their local community.

According to the NHTSA, consumers do not need to register or obtain a voucher to benefit from the program. Instead, the auto dealers will apply a credit at the time of purchase.

To be eligible for the credit, consumers must provide a one-year proof of insurance, registration and a clear title, free of any liens. In addition, the vehicle must have been manufactured within the last 25 years. To learn more about the CARS program, visit www.cars.gov or call the CARS information hotline at (866) CAR-7891 (227-7891).

Madigan encouraged consumers to report suspicious programs or advertising to her Consumer Fraud Bureau. 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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