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MADIGAN CALLS ON OIL COMPANIES TO PUT STOP TO SYNTHETIC DRUG SALES AT GAS STATIONS

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today sent a letter calling on nine oil companies to take steps to stop synthetic drugs from being illegally sold at gas stations and convenience stores operating under their brand names, noting that law enforcement agencies have confirmed over 130 instances of branded gas stations having illegally sold synthetic drugs across the country in recent years.

The [letter](#) from Madigan, the Florida attorney general and 41 other attorneys general expressed serious concerns about the reported incidents of gas stations and convenience stores operating under brand names of reputable oil companies and selling illegal synthetic drugs.

Synthetic drug use has increased dramatically over the past several years. Starting in 2010, over 11,000 people, many of whom were younger than 17, went to the emergency room after using synthetic marijuana.

“When teens and young adults can find synthetic drugs for sale at gas stations operating under well-known brands, it gives these illegal products the false appearance of legitimacy when in fact they are very dangerous, potentially deadly drugs,” Madigan said. “Oil companies spend millions of dollars on marketing campaigns designed to convince customers their brands are trustworthy. Prohibiting the sale of synthetic drugs in their stores can only protect their brand reputations while also protecting our youth.”

The letter was sent to top company officials at British Petroleum, Chevron Corporation, Citgo Petroleum Corporation, Exxon Mobil Corporation, Marathon Petroleum Corporation, Phillips 66, Shell Oil Company, Sunoco, and Valero Energy Corporation. In it, the attorneys general requested the companies address this growing problem by:

- Prohibiting franchisees from selling any synthetic drugs;
- Ensuring the prohibition is understood by store franchisees and their employees by communicating directly with each of them;
- Establishing a point of contact in corporate offices for franchisees, should they have any questions about synthetic drugs;
- Revoking the franchisee/franchisor relationship with any gas station or convenience store that sells synthetic drugs; and
- Reporting to local law enforcement authorities if any franchisee is selling synthetic drugs.

Attorney General Madigan has worked on many fronts to increase awareness of the dangers of synthetic drugs in Illinois. In November 2011, the Attorney General hosted the first-ever statewide emergency summit with state, county and local law enforcement officers, educators, health care professionals and parents to talk about the growing use of synthetic drugs, which led to the launch of “Operation Smoked Out,” a statewide initiative to remove synthetic drugs from retail outlets. Madigan’s office also has conducted numerous workshops with prosecutors and law enforcement personnel throughout Illinois to increase the focus on investigating and prosecuting these cases.

Joining Madigan in sending today’s letter were attorneys general from the following states and territories: Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

