



**GREGORY D. TOTTE**  
**District Attorney**

**NEWS RELEASE**

[www.vcdistrictattorney.com](http://www.vcdistrictattorney.com)

Twitter: [@VenturaDAOoffice](https://twitter.com/VenturaDAOoffice)

Contact: Danny Lo  
Title: Deputy District Attorney  
Telephone: (805) 662-1714  
E-mail: [Danny.Lo@ventura.org](mailto:Danny.Lo@ventura.org)

Approved: CMT   
Date: Thursday, March 5, 2020  
Release No.: 20-025

**District Attorney Issues Covid-19 Price Gouging Consumer Alert**

*VENTURA, California* – District Attorney Gregory D. Totten today issued a consumer alert regarding price gouging following Governor Gavin Newsom’s March 4, 2020, declaration of a state of emergency due to the spread of COVID-19, commonly known as coronavirus. Pursuant to this state of emergency, price gouging as defined by Penal Code section 396 is illegal until September 4, 2020.

Until September 4, 2020, businesses, retailers, and other service or goods providers may not charge a price that is more than 10 percent higher than the price that existed prior to the declaration. Covered goods and services include: food, emergency supplies, medical supplies, building materials, gasoline, transportation, freight and storage services, hotel accommodations and rental housing. Goods and service providers may charge more than 10 percent only if their costs have increased.

Price gouging is a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$10,000. Violators may also be subject to civil enforcement actions and penalties up to \$5,000 per violation, plus restitution. County residents may report suspected price gouging by calling the District Attorney’s Office at (805) 662-1737 or by sending an email to [DAOpricegouging@ventura.org](mailto:DAOpricegouging@ventura.org).

###

The Ventura County District Attorney’s Office is the public prosecutor for the county’s 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

Follow the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office on Twitter [@VenturaDAOoffice](https://twitter.com/VenturaDAOoffice)