



**ERIK NASARENKO**  
**District Attorney**

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Lemon Packing Facility Settles Case for Unlawful Release of Air Contaminant**

*VENTURA, California* – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Saticoy Lemon Association (the Association), which operates a lemon-packing facility in Santa Paula, entered a settlement following its unreported release of the air contaminant sodium hypochlorite.

On February 8, 2019, a malfunction of fruit washing equipment at the Association’s facility triggered the release of commercial grade sodium hypochlorite into the air. Sodium hypochlorite is the active ingredient in household bleach and is used to sterilize fruit prior to packing. Two local schools, Blanchard Elementary School and Briggs School, were required to shelter in place due to the incident.

Under the terms of the settlement, the Association will pay \$25,000 in civil penalties for the unlawful release of sodium hypochlorite. The settlement includes a permanent injunction requiring the Association to immediately report any release or threatened release of air contaminants to local authorities. In addition, the Association will pay a total of \$22,614 in agency costs to reimburse Ventura County Environmental Health Department, Ventura County Fire Department, the City of Santa Paula, and the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office relating to the initial response and subsequent investigation of the incident.

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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 professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.