

NEWS RELEASE

FROM: JOHN D. PHILLIPS

District Attorney of San Joaquin County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ON JULY 16, 2003

DISTRICT ATTORNEYS REACH \$900,000 SETTLEMENT WITH ONE OF CALIFORNIA'S LARGEST GREASE HAULING BUSINESSES

A civil enforcement action charging a large Fresno-based grease hauling business with violations of water pollution laws was settled today in Stockton, San Joaquin County District Attorney John D. Phillips announced. The case was based on the work of a statewide taskforce created by the California Environmental Protection Agency to focus enforcement efforts on the illegal disposal of waste grease in California. The complaint was filed in January 2003 in San Joaquin County with the action joined by 12 other counties throughout California including Fresno, Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, Sacramento, San Bernardino, Shasta, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, and Tehama Counties.

The complaint alleged that Thrifty Best Service, a company operated by Central California Wastepaper Incorporated, violated provisions of the State Water Code and Fish and Game Code, created a public nuisance and engaged in unfair business practices including false advertising, by illegally dumping inedible kitchen grease into public sewers and storm drains. Ameriguard Maintenance Service, LLC, a successor company to Thrifty Best, was later added to the complaint after Thrifty Best Services ceased doing business in California.

While the defendants did not admit the allegations in the complaint, as part of the civil settlement, Thrifty Best did admit nine counts of contempt for violating restraining orders

issued in the case. The \$900,000 settlement in the case represents \$620,400 in penalties and \$279,600 in costs. Prosecutors also obtained a court order preventing Thrifty Best Service and its owner, William Shubin, from doing business in California forever. Ameriguard Maintenance Services and its owner, Michael Bessonov, are required by the court order to comply with all applicable laws and to provide the prosecutors with information verifying that fact.

The illegal disposal of restaurant grease is a significant statewide problem causing damage to publicly owned sewage treatment facilities, expensive sewer back-ups and damage to the environment including water pollution. Businesses contracting with Thrifty Best for waste grease services expected the company to properly dispose of the waste through sewage treatment plants, rendering plants or recycling facilities and were likely unaware of the alleged unlawful disposals. The complaint alleged that Thrifty Best Service employees violated the law in at least seven incidents occurring in seven different locations ranging from Redding to Rancho Cucamonga.

The District Attorneys joining in today's filing include:

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