



The United States Attorney's Office

## Central District of California

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Enforcement Actions Directed At Commercial Marijuana Operations Across Southland Include Criminal Drug Trafficking Case, Property Forfeiture Lawsuits and Warning Letters to Landlords

LOS ANGELES – As part of a coordinated effort by California's four United States Attorneys, federal prosecutors in Los Angeles have taken a series of actions against illegal commercial marijuana operations, including a building in South Orange County that houses eight marijuana stores and a trafficking ring that sold marijuana at its San Fernando Valley storefront, and sent marijuana to customers as far away as New York state.

The coordinated enforcement actions that were announced today address a marijuana industry in California that has swelled to include numerous drug-trafficking enterprises that operate commercial grow operations, intricate distribution systems and hundreds of marijuana stores across the state – even though the federal Controlled Substances Act prohibits the sale and distribution of marijuana.

"It is important to note that for-profit, commercial marijuana operations are illegal not only under federal law, but also under California law," said United States Attorney André Birotte Jr. "While California law permits collective cultivation of marijuana in limited circumstances, it does not allow commercial distribution through the store-front model we see across California."

The actions being announced today in the Central District of California include:

a criminal indictment that charges six people with marijuana trafficking that allegedly generated nearly \$15 million in profits in only eight months;

the filing of civil forfeiture lawsuits against three properties and a related seizure of more than \$135,000 from the bank account of one property owner; and

warning letters sent to the operators and landlords of 38 marijuana stores.

The criminal case unsealed this week names six defendants linked to a now-defunct North Hollywood marijuana store called NoHo Caregivers. The drug trafficking organization – which sold marijuana at NoHo Caregivers, sold marijuana to other stores, and sent marijuana to affiliates in