



CITY OF OAKLAND
newsrelease
Office of the City Attorney

Wednesday, December 22, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oakland sues to shut down hotels catering to prostitution

OAKLAND, CA – At a press conference Wednesday at Oakland City Hall, City Attorney John Russo announced a local measure to fight prostitution and the sexual exploitation of children.

On Tuesday, the City Attorney's Office filed lawsuits against three hotel owners in Oakland that have allowed their businesses to be used as centers for prostitution. The lawsuits seek to shut down the Economy Inn on East 12th Street, the National Lodge on International Boulevard and the Sage Motel on MacArthur Boulevard.

Two of the businesses – the Economy Inn and the National Lodge – are located along the “track,” a part of International Boulevard known for prostitution and related crimes.

“Certain hotels in this city have allowed and profited from this criminal industry – an industry in which horrific crimes against women and girls are routine,” Russo said. “Under California law, hotel owners are responsible for preventing prostitution on their properties. If owners can't take even rudimentary steps to prevent their businesses from becoming a danger to the community, we will shut them down.”

California's Red Light Abatement Act (Penal Code § 11225) allows Oakland to sue to close the hotels, seek civil penalties of \$25,000 from every individual defendant and recover other damages.

Russo was joined by Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley, whose nationally recognized HEAT (Human Exploitation and Trafficking) Unit is spearheading a comprehensive effort to combat commercial sexual exploitation of minors in Oakland and Alameda County. City Councilwoman Patricia Kernighan, police officials and community members also attended the conference.

“Many Oakland businesses have joined the District Attorney's HEAT Watch Program, which engages businesses to be the eyes and ears in combating this modern form of human slavery,” O'Malley said. “City Attorney John Russo has shown his leadership in holding those businesses accountable for facilitating this exploitation, which is at epidemic levels in our city.”
