

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

RE: People of the State of California v. Titan Frozen Fruit, LLC, Case No. 21CV04617

**Santa Maria Fruit Processing Company Settles Case
Involving the Handling of Hazardous Materials**

District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that the Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit of the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office has reached a settlement with the Santa Maria-based fruit processing company, Titan Frozen Fruit, LLC ("Titan"), related to claims that the company failed to properly implement a Hazardous Materials Business Plan. The case stemmed from an August, 2020 incident at the company's facility, wherein two cleaning agents containing hazardous materials mixed, causing the release of chlorine gas within the facility. Santa Maria City Fire responded to the incident, and at least 5 employees were treated for symptoms related to their exposure to the gas.

When inspectors with Santa Barbara County's Certified Unified Program Agency ("CUPA") investigated the incident, they learned that the company's Hazardous Materials Business Plan ("HMBP") failed to account for the possibility of the chemicals coming into contact with one another during cleaning operations. As a result, the HMBP had no procedures in place to ensure cleaning did not occur simultaneously, nor did it account for how the chemicals should be stored to prevent them from mixing. Titan fully cooperated with CUPA's investigation and the violations were quickly remedied.

The Final Judgment includes the following provisions:

- \$34,775.00 in civil penalties pursuant to the Health and Safety Code:
 - o \$17,387.50 payable to the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office
 - o \$17,387.50 payable to Santa Barbara County CUPA
- \$27,820 in civil penalties pursuant to the Business and Professions Code, payable to the County of Santa Barbara, for the enforcement of consumer protection laws
- \$6,955.00 in Supplemental Environmental Projects
- \$951.36 in cost recovery to the Santa Maria Fire Department
- An injunction that requires Titan to properly implement, and regularly update their HMBP

District Attorney Dudley said, "Violations involving the handling of hazardous materials pose a danger to members of the public and to first responders. As this case makes clear, they also threaten the safety of company employees. My office takes these violations very seriously, and we appreciate Titan's cooperation in the resolution of this matter."

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