



OFFICE OF NAVAJO NATION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Price gouging on and off the Navajo Nation.

St. Michaels, Navajo Nation (ARIZ) – Navajo consumers must be aware of price gouging on and off the Navajo Nation. What is price gouging? Price gouging is when individuals or stores raise the price of goods, services or commodities in the midst of a crisis or during natural disasters. Every state has different measures to protect consumers against price gouging. In most states, price gouging during a time of emergency is considered a violation of unfair or deceptive trade practices law.

Currently Arizona does not have laws prohibiting price gouging or charging high prices. Absent evidence of fraud, collusion or other anticompetitive behavior, the Arizona Attorney General's Office cannot take legal action against retailers who may legally charge what they think the market will bear.

New Mexico also does not have laws prohibiting price gouging or charging high prices, however, the New Mexico's Attorney General is urging consumers to report suspected price gouging by calling (844) 255-9210 or filing a complaint directly online at <https://secure.nmag.gov/ecs>. In a statement on March 12th, New Mexico's Attorney General Balderas announced that "Anyone increasing prices in order to illegally profit from this emergency will be prosecuted." Attorney General Balderas called the practice of price gouging unconscionable.

Under the New Mexico Unfair Practices Act (NMSA §57-12-8), the New Mexico Attorney General has authority to bring enforcement actions against businesses engaged in unfair, deceptive, or unconscionable trade practices. NMSA §57-12-2(E)

Utah, is the only state that encompasses the Navajo Nation that have laws prohibiting price gouging or charging higher prices. Utah statutes states, after a declared emergency, charging an "excessive price" for consumer goods and services (10% higher than normal or 30% higher for goods and services that were *not* provided immediately before the declaration) is punishable by the issuance of a cease and desist order and civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per day.

Utah's Attorney General also is requesting to have consumers to contact (800) 721-7233 or email consumerprotection@utah.gov if consumers notice price gouging within the state.

Leonard Gorman, Executive Director of the Office of Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission, said "Shik'ei, be careful when you are purchasing good and services during this period of time when the country is in a state of public health emergency. Business and

individuals increase the prices of their goods and services because what they sell may be on demand. It is against state law or regulations to price gouge goods and services.” Gorman further states, “contact the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission with details where these cases are taking place or look on the Commission’s website to call the appropriate state offices.”

For more information, contact the Commission at our temporary contact number at (505) 422-3189 or visit Commission website at www.nnhrc.navajo-nsn.gov.

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