



# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**No. 061 – March 23, 2020**

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## **Nessel Assigns Special Agents to Price-gouging Investigations**

### *Consumer Complaints Now More Than 1,400*

**LANSING, MICH.** – Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel recently assigned a team of special agents to assist her attorneys in gathering information related to the high number of price-gouging complaints the Attorney General's office has been receiving during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. These men and women are highly trained criminal investigators and will help the office visit stores to evaluate details of consumer complaints, assist with online research to compare pricing, and receive phone calls or letters from consumers.

The latest tally of price-gouging complaints received by the Attorney General's office is 1,417, which includes 585 written complaints received as of 7 a.m. today and 832 complaints received by phone as of 5 p.m. Saturday.

The Attorney General's office is also recognizing the help of consumers in policing the market by shaming gougers on social media and sharing their experiences and receipts with the Attorney General's office. Investigators have noticed a positive shift in the market, partly because of these efforts. In several instances last week, the Attorney General's investigators visited stores and found that, if there had been elevated prices, the situation had been corrected.

However, that work is just beginning. The Attorney General's Consumer Protection intake team continues to receive new complaints of price-gouging and investigators are getting more information about potential targets of interest – including those in various online marketplaces.

“Our objective is to make sure business owners are following the laws Michigan has in place to protect consumers, and public awareness of price-gouging can offer valuable support in our efforts to keep companies honest,” Nessel said. “If that can be accomplished without legal action, then that is a path we will pursue. But if stores continue to disregard the rules and raise their prices beyond justifiable amounts, then we will hold them accountable.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused some instability in the marketplace, which has led to some artificial, and sometimes unlawful, price spikes. Consumers are urged to purchase what they need, and to not buy in large amounts – or at prices – that are based on fear.

“Fear is a powerful motivator,” Nessel said. “But working together, we can stabilize both the prices and the levels of supplies on our grocery store shelves.”

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EX-201 (01/2019)  
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Consumers can [file a complaint online](#) or by calling the Consumer Protection tip line, 877-765-8388. Hours of operation are between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](#) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](#).

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