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MEDIA CONTACTS:
Dan Tierney: 614-466-3840
Kate Hanson: 614-466-3840

Ohio Attorney General Monitoring Propane Price Complaints

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today said that his office is actively monitoring complaints regarding propane prices and shortages. The Attorney General also will work with other states to look for possible anti-competitive activities related to the sale of propane.

“We want to assure Ohioans that we will carefully monitor reports of potential price gouging or other unfair business practices related to the extreme cold,” Attorney General DeWine said. “We want all Ohioans to be safe during these frigid days. If you use propane to heat your home, be especially careful. Contact your propane supplier before your tank reaches emergency levels and reach out for help as soon as you need it.”

Approximately six percent of Ohioans use propane to heat their homes. In Ohio, consumers have been informed that propane availability is limited this winter and that recent price increases are due to increased demand and depleted inventories.

The Ohio Attorney General’s Office has been in contact with propane suppliers and is taking propane complaints from consumers. In some cases, consumers say their propane suppliers are not filling tanks as quickly as normal or that they are charging higher prices, which some consumers believe to be price gouging.

Laws that address price gouging vary from state to state. While Ohio does not have a statute that deals directly with price gouging, state law bans unconscionable sales practices. A practice could be considered unconscionable if the supplier knew at the time of the transaction that the price was substantially higher than the price at which similar goods or services could be readily obtained.

To protect themselves, Ohioans should be vigilant about their propane usage and contact their propane supplier before their tanks reach low levels, because it may take longer than normal for the consumer's tank to be filled.

The Attorney General’s Office works to help Ohio consumers whose propane tanks reach emergency levels. For consumers who contact the office when their tank is 10 percent or less full, a staff member will call the consumer’s propane supplier that day to determine why a fill is being delayed. Consumers who have an inability to pay for their propane fill will be directed to state and local resources for help.

Consumers who suspect price gouging or other unfair business practices should contact the Ohio Attorney General’s Office by calling 800-282-0515 or visiting www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov. Consumers should submit as much information and documentation as possible with their complaints.