



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, MAY 30, 2008

Contact: Frank Mateljan
(213) 978-8340 (O)
(213) 479-5675 (M)

L.A. CITY ATTORNEY ROCKY DELGADILLO FILES CHARGES IN PREDATORY TOWING CASE

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, the City's chief prosecutor, today announced his Office's Corruption, Fraud and Enforcement Unit has filed multiple criminal counts against Diamond Towing and its owner for predatory towing practices in violation of state law.

Diamond Towing and company owner Warren Alec Halprin, 46, were each charged with 10 criminal counts including two counts of unlawfully taking a vehicle, failing to obtain written authorization from the property owner prior to a vehicle tow, failing to make a good faith inquiry that the parked car was there for at least one hour as required by law, and operating a towing business without a permit from the Los Angeles City Board of Commissioners.

If convicted on all counts, Halprin and the Company could face up to \$27,000 in penalties and Halprin could also face up to four years and six months in jail.

Arraignment is scheduled for July 2, 2008 in Department 81 of Los Angeles Superior Court.

Charges against Diamond Towing stem from three incidents in which officers observed tow trucks, one of which was driven by Halprin himself, conducting tows in violation of state towing laws. In one incident, undercover LAPD officers were in a parking lot monitoring something across the street when a Diamond Towing truck pulled in and towed one of the unmarked LAPD vehicles which had only been parked less than 15 minutes.

Assembly Bill 2210, sponsored by City Attorney Delgadillo, and which went into effect on January 1, 2007, has tightened existing towing regulations and added criminal penalties for certain violations. Under AB2210, towing companies are required to (1) provide the car owner with a copy of written authorization signed by the property owner who requested the tow prior to payment; (2) accept all valid credit cards and conspicuously display a sign indicating such; (3) unconditionally release any vehicle to the vehicle owner when the car is still on private property; (4) only charge one half the cost for releasing the car while on private property; (5) not charge more than is allowed by towing companies under contract with law enforcement;

(6) make a good-faith inquiry to confirm that the vehicle was illegally parked for more than one hour, unless the car was blocking a fire lane/fire hydrant, an entrance to the property, or parked in a designated apartment parking spot; and (7) notify law enforcement of the tow within 60 minutes of the tow or 15 minutes after arriving at the storage facility, whichever is less. Violations of any of these provisions are criminal misdemeanors.

Since 2004, City Attorney Delgadillo's prosecutors have successfully secured the conviction of numerous predatory towing companies and their owners, including Top Notch Towing, Non Stop Towing Inc., Competition Tow Service Inc., JP Towing, State Towing, Safety Towing, Global Towing, ACT Tow, Quick Lift Towing, and 5A Roadside.

###