



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL ALAN WILSON
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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Contact: J. Mark Powell
(803) 734-3670
mpowell@scag.gov

Attorney General Alan Wilson Advises South Carolinians to Watch for Hurricane Sandy Related Scams

COLUMBIA, SC - South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson today warned South Carolinians to beware of opportunities in investment schemes in the wake of Hurricane Sandy's destruction.

"Unfortunately, we know from experience that disasters bring out the worst in people, especially those seeking to profit from the misfortunes of others. Potential investors should be very cautious if approached with unsolicited Hurricane Sandy-related investment offers," Wilson said.

Wilson noted cold-calling telephone salespeople, advertisements, and Internet postings that promote investment pools or bonds to help storm victims, or tout water-removal or purification technologies, electricity-generating devices and distressed real estate remediation programs should be a red flag for investors.

People also should be aware of the rush of solicitations that follow a highly publicized natural disaster or other crises. "There will be fraudulent charity solicitations," Wilson said. "Some will be looking for your money; some will be attempting to steal your credit card information for identity theft. As with any charitable contribution, people wanting to help with relief efforts following Sandy should send contributions to only those charities with an established track record."

Wilson also warned fake victims may attempt to use social media to dupe well-intentioned donors. "Do not donate to unknown individuals that purport to need aid that post on Facebook, Craigslist, Twitter or other social media sites. These are likely to be fraudsters, who may not have even been a resident of the United States much less a victim of the storm."

Recalling that many con artists attempted to exploit investors in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Wilson urged investors to:

- Hang up on aggressive cold callers promoting hurricane-related investments and delete unsolicited e-mail or Internet messages discussing small companies with new hurricane-related technologies or products.
- Use common sense. Pie-in-the-sky promises often signal investment fraud.
- Contact the Securities Division of the South Carolina Attorney General's Office at (803) 734-9936 to check that both the seller and investment are licensed and registered. If not, they may be operating illegally.

