



California Public Utilities Commission

505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Terrie Prosper, 415.703.1366, news@cpuc.ca.gov

PUC INVESTIGATION LEADS TO CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST COASTAL MOVING AND STORAGE, INC.

SAN FRANCISCO, March 1, 2006 - The California Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) Consumer Protection and Safety Division today announced that a staff investigation found that Ronen Ratoviz, owner and president of Coastal Moving and Storage, Inc., performed moving services without a valid household goods permit issued by this Commission.

The PUC staff investigation was initiated after receiving consumer complaints alleging that carrier applied hidden charges and/or charges for services not performed, and demanded payment higher than the original estimate provided. The investigation also uncovered additional violations of PUC consumer protection rules that movers are required to follow. In mid-February 2006, the PUC submitted the results of its investigation to the Corruption, Fraud and Enforcement Unit in the Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney, and requested that a criminal complaint be filed against Ratoviz and the corporation.

On Feb. 24, 2006, the City Attorney's Office filed a misdemeanor complaint in the Los Angeles Superior Court. Arraignment is scheduled for March 14, 2006.

Ratoviz was charged with 11 counts of Public Utilities Code, one count of Penal Code, and one count of Business and Professions Code violations, including grand theft; operated a moving company without a permit; false advertising; and various consumer protection rules outlined in Commission's Maximum Rate Tariff 4.

Grand theft carries a maximum penalty of one year in jail and/or a \$1,000 fine. False advertising carries a maximum penalty of six months in jail and/or a \$2,500 fine. Each violation of PUC rules and regulations carries a maximum penalty of one year in jail and/or a \$10,000 fine.

The Public Utilities Code makes it a crime to engage or attempt to engage in transporting used household goods without a valid PUC license. The PUC suggests that consumers check to see whether a moving company is licensed with the Commission before contracting with the company by calling the Commission at 1-800-877-8867 or visiting our website at

<http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/static/transportation/movers.htm>. If consumers have a complaint about a move that they cannot resolve with the mover, call the Commission at 1-800-366-4782 to file a complaint. For more information on the PUC, please visit: www.cpuc.ca.gov.

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