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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Re: Investigation At Ripon State Crime Lab

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PROSECUTORS REVEAL INVESTIGATION AT RIPON STATE CRIME LAB

The District Attorneys of five central California counties who rely on the services of the California Department of Justice's Bureau of Forensic Services Central Valley Crime Lab in Ripon announced today that an investigation has been launched by the State Department of Justice into unexplained weight discrepancies within the lab on drugs sent there for analysis by law enforcement agencies in the five counties. One criminalist employed at the Ripon lab has been placed on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation.

Earlier this month, management of the Central Valley Crime Lab became aware of a protocol breach concerning the handling and analysis of a methamphetamine evidence sample. Subsequent investigation and retesting revealed additional methamphetamine samples handled by the same analyst showed lower weights than originally reported.

Birgit Fladager, District Attorney of Stanislaus County, James Willett, District Attorney of San Joaquin County, Donald Segerstrom, District Attorney of Tuolumne County, Larry D. Morse II, District Attorney of Merced County and Barbara Yook, Acting District Attorney of Calaveras County, the five counties served by the Ripon lab, were briefed Wednesday in Modesto by management officials from the Department of Justice's Bureau of Forensic Services. As a result of that briefing the five District Attorneys are beginning a thorough review of all cases handled by the analyst in question dating back to 2006. The District Attorneys have pledged to begin notifying defendants and defense attorneys in the affected cases.

"As prosecutors we have an affirmative obligation under the law to provide any potentially exculpatory information to the defense and we all take that ethical obligation seriously," Fladager said.

“We appreciate officials from the Central Valley Crime Lab and Bureau of Forensic Services bringing this matter to our immediate attention. We all have worked with the Ripon crime lab for many years and retain faith in the integrity of the lab and its personnel,” she added.

Questions concerning the investigation should be directed to Christine Gisparac, Public Information Officer for the Department of Justice at (510) 622-4500.

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