



PRESS RELEASE

Attorney General Frosh, Maryland Securities Commissioner Caution Investors to be Wary of Potential Scams in Wake of Hurricanes Irma and Harvey

BALTIMORE, MD (September 11, 2017) - In the wake of widespread damage caused by Hurricanes Irma and Harvey, the Office of Attorney General's Securities Division is cautioning investors to watch out for opportunistic investment scams.

"As we have seen in Texas and Florida, natural disasters bring out the best in people, with neighbors helping neighbors. Unfortunately, we know from experience that disasters also can bring out the worst in people, particularly those seeking to profit from the misfortune of others," said Attorney General Brian E. Frosh. "Unsolicited investment offers seeking to capitalize on the aftermath of natural disasters should always be approached with a wary eye."

Attorney General Frosh urges investors to watch for red flags of hurricane-related scams, including unsolicited email, social media messages, crowdfunding pitches or telephone calls promoting investment pools or bonds to help storm victims, water-removal or purification technologies, electricity-generating devices and distressed real estate remediation programs. Scam artists also may linger to prey on storm victims who anticipate receiving large lump-sum insurance settlements.

"The potential for fraud remains even after the skies have cleared," said Maryland Securities Commissioner Melanie Senter Lubin. "Be wary of any promoter promising quick and high returns on your investments."

Attorney General Frosh also cautioned about fraudulent charitable solicitations that prey on the goodness of people seeking to help those in need. The Maryland Secretary of State (SOS) keeps a [public registry](#) of charitable organizations authorized to solicit in Maryland. If you think you have been a victim of a deceptive or illegal charitable solicitation, report a complaint to the Charities and Legal Services Division at [410-974-5521](tel:410-974-5521) or [1-800-825-4510](tel:1-800-825-4510). Donors should also consider checking Guidestar or Charity Watch for information concerning donations for disaster relief.

The Office of Attorney General's Securities Division offers three tips to help investors avoid disaster-related scams:

- Delete unsolicited emails or social media messages and hang up on aggressive cold callers promoting hurricane-related investments, especially those from small companies touting unproven or new technologies or products.
- Use common sense. Claims of guaranteed returns or low/no investment risk are classic red flags. Every investment involves some degree of risk.
- Do your homework. Contact the [Securities Division](#) of the Office of Attorney General to check that both the seller and investment are licensed and registered. If not, they may be operating illegally.