Attorney General Frosh: Beware of Charity Scams in the Wake of the Ellicott City Floods

BALTIMORE, MD (June 6, 2018) - In the wake of devastating flooding in Ellicott City, many Marylanders may feel compelled to donate funds to assist business owners and residents. Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh and Secretary of State John C. Wobensmith are advising Marylanders to be wary of appeals for charitable donations and to donate wisely.

“Natural disasters often bring out the best in people, with neighbors helping neighbors,” said Attorney General Frosh. “Unfortunately, disasters also can bring out the worst in people, particularly those seeking to profit from the misfortune of others. It is always wise to research a charity first before donating, and avoid any charity or fundraiser that is reluctant to provide information on how donations are used.”

“In the aftermath of these devastating floods, scam artists may attempt to prey on your generosity and use all types of scams, frauds or deceptive acts to line their own pockets,” warns Secretary Wobensmith. “Be sure you know who you are giving to and it is best to give directly to well-established charitable organizations.”

To find out whether a particular charity is registered in Maryland, the Secretary of State’s Office maintains a public registry of charitable organizations authorized to solicit in Maryland. The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division offers tips on giving wisely and can be found here.

If you believe you may have been a victim of a deceptive or illegal charitable solicitation, contact the Charities and Legal Services Division of the Secretary of State’s Office at 410-260-3859 or 1-800-825-4510.

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