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PRESS RELEASE

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**Attorney General Frosh, Environment Secretary Grumbles
Announce Settlement with Home Free Lead Inspections, LLC
*Lead Paint Inspection Company, Two Inspectors Will Pay \$495,000 to Settle
Allegations of Improperly Issued Lead-Free Certificates***

BALTIMORE, MD – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh and Maryland Environment Secretary Ben Grumbles today announced a [settlement](#) with Home Free Lead Inspections, LLC (Home Free) and two of its inspectors, Charles Gillis and David Gillis. The settlement resolves allegations that Home Free and the two inspectors failed to properly perform lead-based paint inspections, issued lead-free inspection certificates for properties that had not been thoroughly inspected, failed to provide notification prior to performing inspections, and failed to submit timely inspection certificates to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

Home Free Lead Inspections was accredited by MDE as a lead paint abatement services contractor in 2015. Charles Gillis and David Gillis, an owner of Home Free Lead Inspections, were accredited by MDE as lead inspectors in 2015. Between 2015 and 2018, Home Free issued approximately 923 lead-free inspection certificates based on inspections performed by the Gillises. Following an investigation, MDE issued an Emergency Suspension of Accreditation to Home Free and Charles Gillis. An accredited inspection contractor hired by MDE as part of the investigation identified lead-based paint at 147 of 215 properties previously inspected by the Gillises. Home Free inspected properties across Maryland but principally in Baltimore City and Baltimore County.

“Lead paint poisoning results in devastating, long term consequences for those exposed, particularly children,” said Attorney General Frosh. “Home Free and its inspectors jeopardized the health of hundreds of residents, failed to comply with numerous state laws, and will pay a significant penalty as a result of this settlement.”

“Maryland’s program to prevent the environmental injustice of childhood lead poisoning is a priority, especially in Baltimore, and enforcement is absolutely essential to its continued success,” said Secretary Grumbles. “Shoddy inspections are unacceptable, and we are committed to excellence through education, training, and necessary and proper enforcement as seen in the significant financial penalty included in this settlement.”

In [February 2020](#), the State filed suit against Home Free, Charles Gillis and David Gillis in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. As part of today's settlement, Home Free agreed to a judgment of \$400,000, and David Gillis and Charles Gillis agreed to a judgment of \$95,000 collectively.

Childhood lead poisoning is a completely preventable disease. Children are at the greatest risk from exposure to lead from birth to age 6, while their neurological systems are developing. Exposure to lead can cause long-term neurological damage that may be associated with learning and behavioral problems, and with decreased intelligence. Since Maryland's lead law was enacted in 1994, the number of childhood lead poisoning cases in the state has decreased by 98%.

In making today's announcement, Attorney General Frosh and Secretary Grumbles thanked Assistant Attorneys General Christopher Corzine and Andrew Gaudreau, and MDE's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program for their work on the settlement. The settlement is subject to court approval.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2021/032921.pdf>