

Media Contacts:

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press@oag.state.md.us 410-576-7009

Prince George's County Home Builders Ordered to Pay Over \$950,000 for Violations of Consumer Protection Laws

More than 800 violations committed across Montgomery, Anne

Arundel, and Baltimore Counties

BALTIMORE, MD (**December 6, 2024**) – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown announced today that Prince George's County Circuit Court Judge Krystal Q. Alves affirmed a <u>Final Order</u> issued by the Consumer Protection Division against Finish Werks Corp. and Finish Werks Custom Builders, Inc., and owner William Karl "Harris" Woodward, for unfair and deceptive trade practices related to their modular new home construction businesses.

The Final Order states that the Finish Werks companies violated Maryland's Consumer Protection Act, Custom Home Protection Act, and New Home Deposits Act over 800 times when they took over \$1 million in deposits and progress payments from consumers to construct modular homes in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Montgomery counties, but failed to finish construction or correct serious defects in the homes, pay subcontractors, or protect consumer money as required by Maryland law. Instead, they misappropriated consumer money for personal expenses unrelated to the construction of the consumers' homes. Additionally, the Finish Werks companies failed to include statutorily required disclosures and notices in their contracts with consumers. The Final Order also states that Mr. Woodward is individually liable for the violations of his companies.

"Purchasing a home is one of the most important investments a person can make. Maryland families should be able to trust that businesses will honor that investment by delivering safe, secure homes," **said Attorney General Brown.** "My office is committed to holding companies accountable and ensuring that Marylanders' hard-earned money is not taken without the promise of a home being fulfilled."

The Final Order requires Mr. Woodward and his companies to, among other things, immediately cease and desist from violating the law, and to not act as a home builder in Maryland unless they post a performance bond of \$700,000 to protect future consumers from harm. The Order also requires Mr. Woodward and his companies to pay over \$720,000 in restitution and economic damages and \$235,500 in civil penalties to the Division.

Still pending before the Circuit Court for Prince George's County are petitions for judicial review of the Division's Final Orders in four Home Builder Guaranty Fund cases for losses resulting from the acts and omissions of the Finish Werks companies. Oral arguments in those cases are set for later in December 2024 and in January 2025.

Consumers who have had problems with their new homes should contact the Division's Mediation Unit at (410) 528-8662 in Baltimore or call toll free at (877) 259-4525. Consumers can also file a claim by using the New Home Complaint and Guaranty Fund Claim Submission Form, which can be found here. The Office of the Attorney General encourages home buyers to check whether their builder is registered by calling or visiting, Registered Home Builders.

A copy of the court's memorandum affirming its Final Order is available here.

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https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2024/120624.pdf