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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Approved by JAK**  
**Press Release 20-02**

**Re: Case Resolution: Public Official Financial Conflict- of-Interest – Leticia Perez,  
Case BM922667A**

Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced the resolution today of the financial conflict of interest case against Kern County Supervisor Leticia Perez. On January 16, 2020, in a case prosecuted by DDA Christopher Dominguez, Judge Thomas Clark accepted a case resolution wherein Supervisor Perez agreed to the factual basis for the misdemeanor charges brought against her under Government Code Sections 87100 and 87203, and further agreed to a series of actions to remediate the issues caused by the conflict of interest and disclosure related charges.

The case resolution requires Supervisor Perez to complete the following actions within one year:

- (1) Payment of \$30,000 in penalties, payable to community charitable organizations focusing on homelessness abatement and/or drug rehabilitation. Payment of \$30,000 represents the disgorgement of the financial benefits conferred to Supervisor Perez's husband, Fernando Jara, for his work promoting the cannabis industry prior to Supervisor Perez's October 24, 2017 vote, which involved cannabis land-use ordinance revisions;
- (2) Payment of a \$4,000 administrative fine to the Fair Political Practices Commission and resolution of the Commission's investigation into Supervisor Perez's actions related to the October 24, 2017 vote;
- (3) Performance of 100 hours of community service, to be served through community service providers approved by the Probation Department;
- (4) Completion of an in-person ethics course conducted through the California Institute for Local Government, an organization dedicated to promoting ethics education for local government leaders; and
- (5) Amendment of previously filed Form 700 disclosures covering years 2016 and 2017 to reflect in detail all income received from the cannabis industry by Supervisor Perez and Mr. Jara during those years.

If Supervisor Perez completes the above listed actions within one year of the resolution being entered, and can show sufficient proof verifying their completion, the District Attorney's Office has agreed to the dismissal of the pending criminal charges in lieu of the administrative and other penalties detailed above.

To encourage swift resolution of the required actions, the District Attorney's Office has further agreed to consider effectuating the conditional dismissal upon proof being shown that all necessary actions have been completed as early as six months from the entry of the resolution. The resolution, commonly referred to as a conditional dismissal, is often used in misdemeanor cases where the defendant has no criminal history and has shown willingness to reform and not repeat the alleged criminal behavior. If Supervisor Perez does not complete the above listed actions within the one-year timeframe, the criminal case would proceed to trial, where the District Attorney's Office would be permitted to introduce as evidence the Supervisor's admissions to the factual basis of the charges. Additionally, having received all relevant information on the issue, the defense has waived any claims of selective prosecution regarding the charges brought against the Supervisor.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the resolution:

"When the penalties that may be imposed by the Fair Political Practices Commission are not enough to fully address violations of the public trust, criminal prosecution is appropriate to ensure that there is a strong deterrent for actions that run counter the public's trust and ethics laws. In this case, the criminal prosecution has successfully achieved our goals of ensuring that Supervisor Perez is not permitted to profit from the conflict of interest she engaged in. Moreover, today's resolution requires clear admissions to the facts underlying the charges, ensuring that voters can make educated choices about the Supervisor's actions. In addition, the resolution provides both punishment and rehabilitation measures to ensure future compliance with ethics laws."

The agreed upon stipulation to the facts underlying the charges, signed by both counsel and Supervisor Perez, provide that Supervisor Perez acknowledge the following:

- In December of 2016, Fernando Jara received a \$5,000 check from David Abbasi for consulting services. Mr. Abbasi operated marijuana dispensaries during that time.
- In a Form-700 submitted on April 3, 2017, by Leticia Perez, which required reporting for calendar year 2016. She did not disclose the payment received from Mr. Abbasi.
- In March of 2017, Fernando Jara was retained pursuant to a written contract by Stephanie Smith and C. Martin Smith, who are principals of Industrial Partners Group (IPG) to represent them and IPG in public affairs and political strategy, IPG's objectives was to seek regulatory approval for IPG cannabis operations in Kern County.
- IPG paid Fernando Jara \$25,000 for the contracted services. Fernando Jara, on behalf of IPG, was to identify viable opportunities for IPG to obtain approval for licensed cannabis operations throughout the Central Valley of California, which included unincorporated Kern County.
- Fernando Jara attended and arranged meetings for IPG principals and agents regarding the potential leasing of property in Kern County for potential cannabis-related operations that would be subject to Kern County jurisdiction.
- In the Summer of 2017, Fernando Jara met with IPG principles and agents in the office of Leticia Perez related to future cannabis regulations in Kern County.
- On October 24, 2017, in her capacity as a Kern County Board of Supervisor, Leticia Perez participated in a vote regarding the approval and regulation of the sale of cannabis and cannabis-related products in unincorporated Kern County. The vote presented a foreseeable financial interest to Leticia Perez and Fernando Jara, and Leticia Perez knew and had reason to know of the financial interest of both herself and Mr. Jara in the vote.
- The parties agree that discovery has been provided in compliance with *People v. Murgia*, and, having had the opportunity to review the materials, the defense will not be making further claims of selective prosecution regarding this case. All parties further agree that by entering the stipulation and conditional dismissal, any such claim is waived and will not be raised in any potential future hearings on the case.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Christopher Dominguez and investigated by the Public Integrity Unit of the District Attorney's Bureau of Investigations.