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Dear Ms. Harris and US Attorneys,

We write to alert you to mailers that the Western States Petroleum Association and major oil companies sent earlier this week to the public. These mailers contained fraudulent information. The industry did this to protect its profits as it continues to make billions of dollars overcharging Californians for gas at the pump.

The mailer, which addressed SB 350—legislation that would have slashed petroleum use in cars and trucks in half—claimed to represent Senate Leader Kevin de Leon’s “constituents.” The mailer said that passage of the law would “take gasoline and choices away from the people who supported you” by making it harder for families in LA to drive to work and increasing the price of groceries.

Printed in the top left corner of the mailer was the name of the mailer’s sponsor-- The California Drivers Alliance with its website address of [driversalliance.org](http://driversalliance.org). Anyone trying to reach that URL address would be taken to a fake website listing links to driving in Texas, defensive driving and the like, and would see the domain name was up for sale.

If you type the group’s the group’s real website, which is at [californiadriversalliance.org](http://californiadriversalliance.org), states up front that the California Drivers Alliance is “a program of the Western States Petroleum Association.” How could a well-polished multi-million dollar campaign forget its own web address? Oil companies didn’t forget it; they simply wanted to mislead the public. The oil industry deliberately misled the public in a major fraud.

The Western Petroleum Association’s website at [WSPA.org](http://WSPA.org) states that the association “represents companies that account for the bulk of petroleum exploration, production, refining, transportation and marketing in the five western states of Arizona, California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.” Nowhere does the trade association state that it represents California consumers and drivers. Federal Statute 940 18 U.S.C. Section 1341 sets out two elements in mail fraud: (1) having devised or intending to devise a scheme to defraud (or to perform specified fraudulent acts), and (2) use of the mail for the purpose of executing, or attempting to execute, the scheme (or specified fraudulent acts).

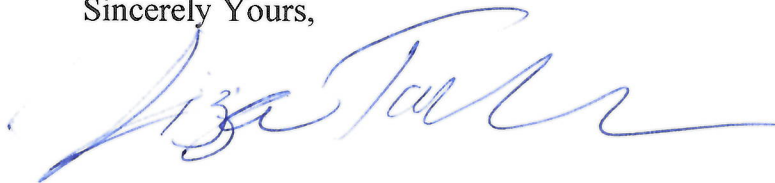
Clearly, the oil industry had a scheme to commit fraud, perpetrated for profit, by steering the public to a red herring website that masked the true financial interests behind the mailer. The oil industry used the mail to further that scheme, and had the specific intent of deceiving the public in order to protect the oil industry’s future profits and its business model for financial gain.

Any reasonable person who went to the fake website for the California Drivers Alliance would have been confused about this group and who backs it. People would miss the fact that the oil industry created this fictional grassroots group to kill off an attempt to slash consumer demand for gasoline, thus lowering gas prices and *saving* consumers money on gasoline in the long run.

The oil industry was acting to protect its oligopoly and profit stream. If the public knew that the oil companies were behind this mailer, they would not believe a word of it. It's very likely that this was not a simple typographical error. Instead, it appears to be a deliberate strategy to use the mail to deceive the people of California.

We ask that you investigate how the Western States Petroleum Association and its members used the US mail system to deliberately deceive the public for its own financial gain and bring mail fraud charges if this is the case.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Liza Tucker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Liza Tucker  
Consumer Advocate

Enclosed: Screen shots of the mailer, and websites belonging to the [driversalliance.org](http://driversalliance.org) and the [californiadriversalliance.org](http://californiadriversalliance.org)