



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
PRESS RELEASE

Ethics Commission

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, April 10, 2014

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**ETHICS COMMISSION LEVIES \$80,000 FINE
IN CAMPAIGN MONEY LAUNDERING CASE**

Stacey Fulhorst, Executive Director of the City of San Diego Ethics Commission, announced today the Commission's approval of a stipulated settlement agreement with Marc Chase, the owner of Symbolic Motor Car Company. Chase agreed to pay a fine of \$80,000 for laundering or facilitating the laundering of campaign funds totaling \$156,500 from Jose Susumo Azano Matsura, one of his customers, to various committees supporting mayoral candidates in the 2012 election cycle. In particular, Chase solicited contributions from eight of his associates to the Bonnie Dumanis for Mayor 2012 committee, and illegally reimbursed them with cash he had received from Azano. In addition, he personally laundered a \$120,000 contribution from Azano to the San Diegans in Support of Bob Filner for Mayor 2012 committee, and a \$30,000 contribution from Azano to the San Diego County Democratic Party.

The City's campaign laws expressly prohibit contributions made in the name of anyone other than the true source of the funds because such contributions circumvent the City's contribution limits and deprive the voters of valuable information regarding the financial supporters of City candidates.

"Campaign money laundering is among the most egregious violations of the City's campaign laws," said John O'Neill, the Commission's Vice Chair. "The stiff penalties imposed today should

serve as an important reminder that anyone who participates or assists in the laundering of contributions in City elections will be held accountable.”

According to Ms. Fulhorst, the Commission opened an investigation in this matter in August of 2013, and the staff worked cooperatively with Federal Bureau of Investigation as well as the Office of the United States Attorney during the course of the investigation. She also noted that Ethics Commission fines are paid to the City of San Diego’s General Fund, and the stipulated settlement approved by the Commission resolves all factual and legal issues without the necessity of holding an administrative hearing.

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