

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **SDPD, City Attorney Act to Shut Down Illegal Massage Parlor in Kearny Mesa**

**SAN DIEGO-** After receiving numerous complaints from community members and businesses, City Attorney Mara W. Elliott and San Diego Police Chief David Nisleit announced today the end of a months-long joint investigation into the Ocean Spa massage parlor in Kearny Mesa. City Attorney Elliott has filed a civil law enforcement action to stop prostitution and possible human trafficking occurring at the parlor.

Neighboring businesses complained the site was the source of foot traffic at odd hours, people having intercourse in parked cars and sexual noises loud enough to disrupt a nearby church service. After receiving numerous community complaints regarding illicit sexual activities at Ocean Spa including criminal, nuisance and lewd activities, SDPD's Vice Unit began an extensive and thorough investigation into these complaints, working directly with the Nuisance Abatement Unit of the City Attorney's Office in preparation for prosecution.

**"The owners of Ocean Spa have been masquerading as a legitimate business for far too long," City Attorney Elliott said. "Ocean Spa is a sex shop – not a massage parlor-and it has no place in our community or anywhere else. We look forward to holding these perpetrators accountable and to restoring peace in this complex."**

SDPD spent more than 125 hours investigating prostitution-related crimes at Ocean Spa last year alone. On at least 4 occasions, spa workers offered to sell sex to undercover police officers, which led to the

arrest of at least four individuals for prostitution. They also documented more than 1,270 online advertisements for sex acts at the spa in the last 5 years.

**“The San Diego Police Department takes neighborhood complaints of this nature very seriously,” Police Chief Nisleit said. “Our Vice Unit’s thorough investigation into the operation at businesses just like Ocean Spa bring peace and civility back to San Diego neighborhoods. We are grateful for the collaboration with the City Attorney to eliminate this type of criminal conduct in our communities.”**

Elliott has asked the Court to prohibit their continued operation of an illegal red-light business and pay more than \$100,000 in civil penalties, and reimburse the City for attorney fees and other monies spent responding to police calls and other enforcement-related activities.

The City Attorney’s complaint also alleges that the City code inspector found evidence that indicates the Ocean Spa’s employees lived on premises. “We’re not convinced that these women voluntarily sold sex,” said City Attorney Elliot. “We’re very concerned about the well-being of these employees.”

The City Attorney thanked Senior Chief Deputy City Attorney Gabriela “Gaby” Brannan, who heads the Nuisance Abatement Unit, under the leadership of Assistant City Attorney, Paige Folkman, Supervising Deputy City Attorney Paul Prather and Deputy City Attorney Isabel V. Ignacio. The Chief of Police also thanked Lieutenant Jason Scott as well as the entire VICE unit for their dedication to duty and tireless efforts in this case.

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