



PRESS RELEASE

Colorado Department of Law
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ATTORNEY GENERAL FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST TOBACCO KING FOR FALSE ADVERTISING OF “SPICE”

DENVER—[Attorney General John Suthers](#) announced today that his Consumer Protection Section filed a civil lawsuit against Tobacco King, a Longmont tobacco store owned by Mr. Sang Leaming for selling a variety of products commonly referred to as “spice.” Leaming and Tobacco King sold spice products without warning consumers that the contents may contain illegal synthetic cannabinoids or other undisclosed, and potentially dangerous, chemicals. Agents from the [Colorado Department of Revenue, Liquor & Tobacco Enforcement Division](#) previously seized more than 1,000 containers of spice products from Tobacco King.

“Distributors and stores that sell spice products deceptively market these products as safe and legal, when in fact many of the spice products are a controlled substance under both state and federal law and contain harmful and undisclosed chemicals. By prominently displaying the spice alongside common smoking accessories, Tobacco King made the spice appear to be safe and legal,” said Suthers. “We have already seen a number of serious health effects from these dangerous products,” Suthers continued.

According to the Attorney General’s complaint, Tobacco King regularly sold spice products labeled as “not for human consumption,” or as potpourri or incense. The complaint alleges that Tobacco King and Leaming knew that the products would be consumed to affect a drug-induced high. The complaint further alleges that these products were sold without any disclosure of the chemicals or other ingredients contained in the colorfully-marked packages named Happy Tiger, Scooby Snax, Cosmic Kratom, Black Magic, Mad Hatter, 2012, High Roller Plant Food, Prism, Jamaican, and Funkey Monkey. Under Colorado law, all synthetic cannabinoids are illegal, not merely those designated by federal law.

The investigation by the [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#) and the CDC identified 263 patient ER visits reported between Aug 21, 2013 and Sept 19, 2013. Of those, 165 are likely linked to synthetic marijuana use, 31 are associated with an unknown drug, 67 are still under review, and six are unrelated to synthetic marijuana use. Three deaths are still under investigation. These products may cause hallucinations and kidney failure, limit one's ability to breathe, and other harmful health effects necessitating emergency room treatment. The Attorney General's complaint does not allege that Tobacco King's product was the cause of any of these recent emergency room visits. The Complaint does, however, include a report from a Longmont mother whose teen-aged son became ill after smoking a spice product sold by Tobacco King. Leaming and Tobacco King would have had no idea what chemicals were sprayed onto the spice products they sold as the packaging does not state the contents.

The complaint was filed under the Colorado Consumer Protection Act with the Boulder County District Court. The Office of the Attorney General, Consumer Protection Section and the [Boulder District Attorney's Office](#) worked together on the Tobacco King matter. In addition to the civil lawsuit filed by the Attorney General's Office, the Boulder District Attorney has filed criminal charges against Leaming.

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