



STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Department of Business Oversight

GOVERNOR **Gavin Newsom** • COMMISSIONER **Manuel P. Alvarez**

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California Department of Business Oversight Sees Sharp Increase in Consumer Complaints and Inquiries Since COVID-19 Onset

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Business Oversight (DBO) has experienced a more than 40 percent increase in consumer complaints, calls and inquiries since the onset of COVID-19 in the state, DBO Commissioner Manuel P. Alvarez announced today.

Pandemic-related concerns about mortgages, student loans, personal loans, questionable investments, and apparent fraudulent schemes prompted many of the additional complaints and consumer contacts the DBO received in March through the end of June.

“Predatory financial products and services proliferate in an economic crisis,” Commissioner Alvarez said. “The DBO is stepping up its consumer protection efforts but the public also should be vigilant and extra careful during this historic pandemic.”

In the four-month span from March 1 through the end of June, consumer complaints have increased more than 37 percent to an average of 588 per month, email inquiries jumped 86 percent to almost 2,400 per month and consumer calls climbed 22 percent to more than 3,100 per month. Consumers can reach the DBO at (866) 275-2677 or Ask.DBO@dbo.ca.gov.

The DBO licenses and regulates financial services, including state-chartered banks and credit unions, student loan servicers, money transmitters, securities broker-dealers, investment advisers, non-bank installment lenders, payday lenders, mortgage lenders and servicers, escrow companies, franchisors, Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program administrators and more.

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