



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL LOPEZ CAUTIONS THOSE SEEKING TO DONATE TO
VICTIMS OF THE MAUI WILDFIRES TO AVOID SCAMS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HONOLULU – As Hawai'i residents start to organize resources and solicit donations to help the victims of wildfires devastating West Maui, Attorney General Anne Lopez is alerting residents to use caution when choosing where to send their money and donations.

"I know that the people of Hawai'i will come to the aid of our families, neighbors and communities," says Attorney General Lopez. "We are already seeing various fundraising efforts being promoted on social media platforms and online. In moments of crisis, we all must be extra vigilant against bad actors who try to take advantage of people's goodwill."

Before making a donation, all donors are urged to keep following tips in mind:

- **If you donate, donate to trusted, well-known charities.** Beware of scammers who create fake charities during natural disasters. Always verify a charity's legitimacy through its official website. If someone is fundraising on behalf of a charity you are familiar with, the best practice is to donate directly to that charity.
- **Verify that the charity is legitimate.** Any charity that solicits donation in Hawai'i must be registered with the Department of the Attorney General, and its status can be verified [here](#). There are also a number of independent online sources you can use to verify that a charity is legitimate, including the following:
 - **IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search:** <https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/>
 - **Charity Navigator:** <https://www.charitynavigator.org/>
 - **DCCA Business Search:** <https://hbe.ehawaii.gov/documents/search.html>

- Stay away from **suspicious donation requests** and be mindful of the following scammer's tactics:
 - Rushing you into making a donation. Don't let anyone rush you into making a donation. Take your time to do your research.
 - Asking you to make a donation using cash or gift card. Most legitimate charities will accept credit card and check donations.
 - Using names that sound a lot like the names of real charities. This is one reason it pays to do some research before giving.
 - Scammers make lots of vague and sentimental claims but give no specifics about how your donation will be used.

Charity Scam Resources and Complaints

For more information about charity scams and tips to avoid such scams, potential donors are encouraged to review the Department of the Attorney General's donor education flyer (available [here](#)). Donors with any questions or complaints about a scam charity can contact the Tax & Charities Division at (808) 586-1480 or by sending an email to ATG.Charities@hawaii.gov.

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