

ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL LISA MADIGAN

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**MADIGAN, DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE: GAS STATION OWNERS CHARGED IN
\$1 MILLION FRAUD SWEEP**

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan and the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) announced charges today against four Chicago area gas station owners for defrauding the state of more than \$1 million in sales taxes. The cases are the latest crackdown in a joint operation that to date has recovered nearly \$85 million owed to Illinois from gas station operators who evade sales tax payments.

Madigan filed the following charges against the four gas station owners for underreporting gasoline sales in order to evade sales tax payments to the state:

- Gurmeet Bhola, 56, of Lincolnwood and owner of Bhola Gas & Food in Sauk Village – charged in Cook County with two counts of mail fraud and 31 counts of filing a fraudulent state tax return, all Class 3 felonies punishable by two to five years in prison. Bhola is charged with a scheme to defraud the state out of more than \$500,000 in taxes between January 2007 and July 2012.
- Samson Kadamandla, 54, of Chicago and owner of NRK Inc. in Chicago – charged in Cook County with two counts of mail fraud and 29 counts of filing a fraudulent state tax return, all class 3 felonies. Kadamandla is charged with evading more than \$300,000 in taxes between January 2008 and May 2012.
- Anthony Wabeh, 53, of Skokie and owner of TWI Petro Group – charged in Cook County with one count of mail fraud and five counts of filing a fraudulent state tax return, all class 3 felonies. Wabeh is charged with evading more than \$180,000 in taxes between June 2008 and February 2011 at his four gas stations located in the Rockford area.
- Nawaz Mirza, 58, of Lombard and owner of Mirza Enterprises in Villa Park – charged in DuPage County with two counts of mail fraud and 18 counts of filing a fraudulent state tax return, all Class 3 felonies. Mirza is charged with evading more than \$90,000 in taxes between January 2009 and December 2011.

“The defendants have illegally profited at the expense of the state and Illinois taxpayers,” Madigan said. “This round of indictments demonstrates our standing commitment to hold dishonest business owners accountable for committing state tax fraud.”

“I have been pleased to see that courts around the state have imposed increasingly tough sanctions on individuals who file false tax returns and defraud the state of taxes on behalf of gas stations,” said Revenue Director Brian Hamer.

Defendants Bhola, Kadamandla and Mirza were arrested and freed on bond. Wabeh was arraigned earlier today and was freed on bond.

The crackdown on gas station owners, now in its third year, has led to a new law in Illinois to penalize these criminals. The law, which was an initiative of Madigan’s office and took effect in January, established stronger penalties and strengthened prosecutors’ ability to pursue Illinois businesses and retailers that evade remitting sales taxes to the state. The law created the new crime of sales tax evasion and imposed graduated penalties based on the amount of sales taxes that were evaded.

The cases were investigated by IDOR’s Bureau of Criminal Investigation. Assistant Attorneys General Anshuman Vaidya, Jim Rustik and Kathleen Duhig are handling the prosecution for Madigan’s Special Prosecutions Bureau.