



State Board of Equalization

# News Release

**Chairman Jerome E. Horton**

**4<sup>th</sup> District – Los Angeles**

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## **Jerome E. Horton Cautions Area Retailers Against Criminal Schemes**

*Search is on for suspect impersonating a BOE employee*

Jerome E. Horton, Chairman of the California State Board of Equalization (BOE), today warned Los Angeles area retailers of a person or persons impersonating a BOE investigator for the purpose of stealing money, items, and/or information.

“The Board of Equalization does have inspectors and we do visit retailers. But we always identify ourselves, show our identification and provide business cards,” Horton said. “Retailers should be very wary if a so-called investigator enters the premises and is overly aggressive and does not offer identification. Please contact your local law enforcement if you have suspicions of someone purporting to be from the BOE,” Horton continued.

“Impersonators are subject to prosecution,” Horton continued. “BOE takes these matters very seriously, and will pursue appropriate action.”

The BOE has received several complaints from retailers in the Los Angeles area who are reporting someone entering the store, requesting information from another area of the store and then stealing cash, cigarettes, and other tobacco products. There have also been reports of theft of cigarette license information.

BOE investigators have reported the situation to local authorities and are working to identify the suspicious person or persons. If you have any information regarding this situation, please call the BOE’s Hotline at 888-334-3300 or contact local law enforcement.

Based on current available information, the retailers affected in this scheme are sellers of cigarettes and donut shops. The BOE is working to notify such retailers in the area to look for suspicious imposters who claim to be BOE investigators.

BOE suggests retailers insist anyone claiming to be a representative of the BOE to show identification. BOE has investigators who ensure compliance in the cigarette licensing program. In addition, retailers can expect occasional visits from BOE’s Statewide Compliance Outreach Program (SCOP), designed to ensure retailers are properly registered with and reporting to the BOE. In each instance, BOE employees will offer identification.

Elected in 2010, Chairman Jerome E. Horton is the Fourth District Member of the California State Board of Equalization, representing more than 8.5 million residents in Los Angeles County. He is also the Board of Equalization Legislative Committee chairman. He is the first to serve on the Board of Equalization with over 21 years of experience at the BOE. Horton previously served as an Assembly Member of the California State Assembly from 2000-2006.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization is a publicly elected tax board. The Board of Equalization collects more than \$50 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes. For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit [www.taxes.ca.gov](http://www.taxes.ca.gov).

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