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PRESS RELEASE

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GREENFIELD MAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

People v. Florentino Merino; 18CR008800, SS161134A, MS334807A

SALINAS, California- Monterey County District Attorney Jeannine M. Pacioni announced today that Florentino Merino, age 26, was sentenced to 2 years in the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for driving under the influence with a blood alcohol level of .08 or higher having previously been convicted for numerous priors of driving under the influence.

On September 15, 2018, a Greenfield police officer observed a white Honda Accord with a dark tint on the front driver side window, and therefore, initiated a traffic stop. The officer contacted the driver who identified himself as "Omar Perez" with a date of birth of August 1991. It was later discovered that the driver's true name was Florentino Merino Mendoza, with a date of birth in August 1992. While the officer was speaking to Merino, the officer smelled a strong odor of an alcoholic beverage emitting from his breath. Additionally, he had watery, bloodshot eyes, and slurred speech. Merino admitted he consumed two 12-ounce beers earlier that evening. Merino failed to successfully complete a series of field sobriety tests. He agreed to submit to a breath test, which yielded a blood alcohol content of .19% and .19%.

The defendant has a long prior driving under the influence record which includes 4 prior convictions for driving under the influence in Monterey, including one prior felony conviction.

Greenfield Police Officer Tapia conducted the investigation and arrest in this incident.

This case was presented by members of the District Attorney's Office specialized DUI Vertical Prosecution Unit. Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.