



Department of Justice

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Justice Department Reaches Fair Housing Act Settlement with Las Vegas Developer and Architect

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department today settled a lawsuit filed in November 2005, against Pacific Homes and Pacific Properties and Development Corp., the developers and builders, and Michael Milburn, the architect, of the Pacific Legends West condominium complex in Las Vegas. The suit, filed in the U.S. District Court in Las Vegas, was brought to enforce provisions of the federal Fair Housing Act that require recently constructed dwellings to include features designed to make the dwellings more accessible to persons with physical disabilities.

Pacific Legends West is comprised of 23 two-story buildings containing 210 townhouse-style two-and-three bedroom condominium units, including 92 ground floor units. Under the Fair Housing Act, ground-floor units in non-elevator buildings must contain certain accessible features, such as: accessible routes into and through the units and usable kitchens and bathrooms. Under the settlement, which must be approved by the court, the defendants must retrofit condominium units upon the request of the homeowners; retrofit public and common use areas; provide accessible pedestrian routes; pay \$100,000 in damages to nine aggrieved individuals; and undergo training on the requirements of the Fair Housing Act.

Fighting illegal housing discrimination is a top priority of the Justice Department. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales announced Operation Home Sweet Home, a concentrated initiative to expose and eliminate housing discrimination in America. This initiative was inspired by the plight of displaced victims of Hurricane Katrina who were suddenly forced to find new places to live. Operation Home Sweet Home is not limited to the areas hit by Hurricane Katrina and targets housing discrimination all over the country. More information about Operation Home Sweet Home is available at the Justice Department Web site at <http://www.usdoj.gov/fairhousing>. Individuals who believe that they may have been victims of housing discrimination can call the Housing Discrimination Tip Line (1-800-896-7743), email the Justice Department at fairhousing@usdoj.gov, or contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at 1-800-669-9777.

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability and familial status. Since Jan. 1, 2001, the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division has filed 220 cases to enforce the Fair Housing Act, 100 of which have alleged discrimination based on disability. More information about the Civil Rights Division and the laws it enforces is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt>.