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PRESS RELEASE

**Chester County Shuts Down
Drug Pipeline From Mexico**

Chester County District Attorney Tom Hogan announced arrests in Operation Tubería Rota (translation, Operation Broken Pipeline). The joint federal and local operation was designed to attack the drug pipeline from Mexico that runs through Southern Chester County, resulting in multiple arrests for dealing cocaine. The final defendant was arrested last week, completing a year-long investigation.

District Attorney Hogan stated, "From my days as a federal prosecutor, we were aware that Mexican drug trafficking organizations run a pipeline of drugs up the East Coast, cutting through Southern Chester County. The DTOs hide their drug couriers among the law-abiding Latino population in Southern Chester County. Operation Tubería Rota sends a loud message to the Mexican DTOs -- we know where you are, we are coming after you, and we will shut down your drug pipeline in Chester County."

"This investigation confirms that Mexican drug trafficking organizations have infiltrated our communities throughout Pennsylvania. The defendants in this case established a drug distribution network responsible for distributing significant quantities of cocaine in Chester County," said Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent in Charge David G. Dongilli. "The DEA will continue to use all of its resources to confront these drug organizations with our law enforcement partner-agencies."

The following defendants were arrested in Operation Tubería Rota:

Daniel Ramirez, 28, of Nottingham, Pennsylvania;

Miguel Luna-Rodriguez, a/k/a “Gallo”, 44, of Nottingham, Pennsylvania;

Martin Romero-Cruz, 30, of Oxford, Pennsylvania;

Miguel Lara-Zavala, a/k/a “Twinky”, 44, of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania;

Abel Francisco Tinoco-Guitierrez, 42, of Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania;

Martin Zavala-Zavala, 36, of Coatesville, Pennsylvania;

David Mora, 31, of Reading, Pennsylvania;

Erick Orihuela-Solalinde, 29, of Reading, Pennsylvania;

Moise Lantigua-Ayala, a/k/a “Moi”, 29, of Reading, Pennsylvania;

Fidencio Avalos, a/k/a “La Tusa”, 42, of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania;

Jonathan Garcia Sanchez, a/k/a “Cesar”, 25, of Wilmington, Delaware;

Jesus Zamora-Zamora, 40, of Wilmington, Delaware;

Benjamin Lara-Medina, 38, of Wilmington, Delaware;

Cesar Morales Castillo, a/k/a “Rafael Castaneda” and “Chicles”, 32, of Wilmington, Delaware;

Marcelino Rocha-Luna, a/k/a “Pokey”, 25, of Wilmington, Delaware; and

Jose Miranda Garcia, a/k/a “Mario”, 29, of Newark, Delaware.

The defendants have been charged with drug delivery, conspiracy, and related offenses.¹ Some of the defendants were charged in Chester County, some were charged in federal court in Delaware by the United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Delaware, depending on the defendants’ main geographic area of operation.

The Chester County District Attorney’s Office initiated this investigation. During the investigation, the Chester County Detectives, the Chester County High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Strike Force, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Homeland Security, the Kennett Square Police Department, the East Whiteland Police Department, the Coatesville Police Department, the Delaware State Police, the Pennsylvania State Police, the Reading

¹ A criminal defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

Police Department, and the Berks County Detectives worked together to bring a combination of local and federal resources against these drug organizations.

Law enforcement infiltrated the drug traffickers using multiple confidential sources. These sources were able to make direct purchases of cocaine. The police then used wire taps of the drug dealers' phones to establish contacts and patterns of activity. The investigation discovered that these defendants had direct ties to Mexico and throughout the United States, intersecting with other drug investigations.

District Attorney Hogan added, "This operation was a model of law enforcement cooperation and communication. Because Chester County is such a large county, bordering four other counties and two states, we need to coordinate resources with neighboring law enforcement agencies to combat these drug trafficking organizations. We will continue to use all of our resources to keep these criminals out of Chester County."

The defendants have all been arrested and are in local or federal custody. In addition to criminal charges, a number of the defendants also face deportation proceedings.

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Approved for release:

Thomas P. Hogan