

Thursday, March 22, 2007

## **CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER REMINDS BUSINESSES TO KEEP PRICES FAIR AS NEW YORKERS PREPARE FOR PASSOVER**

### ***DCA Encourages New Yorkers to Call 311 to Report Unusual Price Spikes on Limited Items***

New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Jonathan Mintz today kicked off the beginning of Passover preparations by commending businesses for keeping prices fair for the holiday, while urging New Yorkers to report any unusual price spikes on limited Kosher-for-Passover items through April 10. Commissioner Mintz was joined by City Councilmembers Leroy Comrie and David Weprin, William Rapfogel, CEO of the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty, and representatives from New York State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver's office, the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit, and the Department for the Aging at Streit's Matzo Bakery on the Lower East Side for the announcement. New Yorkers are encouraged to direct any complaints to DCA by calling 311 or on the agency website at [www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers). To deter unfair practices, DCA will follow up on complaints by conducting comprehensive inspections of stores, including checking that scales register accurately, prices are posted, items labeled properly, etc., and issuing violations as appropriate.

"Holidays are a time for families and communities to come together in fellowship. We commend the many City businesses that make the necessary Kosher-for-Passover goods for family holiday meals available and fairly priced during the season," said Commissioner Mintz. "While we find that most businesses do the right thing, we do ask consumers who suspect a problem to call 311 or go to DCA's website so our inspectors can do a complete follow-up inspection."

"For years, I have worked to protect New Yorkers from unscrupulous price-gouging during the Passover holiday," said Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver. "The City hotline will give people a measure of confidence and the ability to immediately communicate their concerns. I encourage all New Yorkers to utilize this valuable resource and help reduce the incidence of price gouging."

"Passover is a time of happy celebration, which should not be diminished by holiday price increases on the part of store owners and caterers alike," said Council Member Leroy Comrie, chairman of the Council's Consumer Affairs Committee. "Many families live on fixed incomes and they should not face exorbitant prices during the holiday season. I commend Commissioner Mintz for his efforts to ensure a fair marketplace for all consumers."

"Prices need to be closely monitored during the Passover holiday to make sure that Kosher consumers are being treated fairly and that there is no unjustified price gouging by store owners," said Councilmember David I. Weprin, chairman of the Council's Finance Committee.

DCA is also working with the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) and the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty to distribute informational flyers. DFTA will be distributing the flyers to more than 300 senior centers citywide. The Met Council will be including informational flyers in their Kosher-for-Passover goods basket distributed to more than 60,000 low income families and individuals throughout the city this

holiday season.

"At this time of the year, we at Met Council reach out a helping hand to the many Jewish families who are unable to purchase Kosher-for-Passover food," said Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty Executive Director / CEO William E. Rapfogel. "We are grateful to Mayor Bloomberg's Department of Consumer Affairs for its support and assistance in making this expanded Passover outreach possible."

Ensuring a fair and vibrant marketplace for consumers and businesses, DCA licenses more than 60,000 businesses in 55 different categories citywide. DCA enforces the City's Consumer Protection Law, Licensing and Weights and Measures laws, as well as other related laws at thousands of businesses throughout New York City. For more information or to file a complaint, call 311 or visit DCA online at

[www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers).