CITY ATTORNEY MIKE FEUER FILES LAWSUIT ALLEGING THE WEATHER CHANNEL APP MINES USERS’ PRIVATE DATA WITHOUT THEIR INFORMED CONSENT

January 4, 2019

LOS ANGELES – City Attorney Mike Feuer today announced that his office has filed suit against TWC Product and Technology, LLC (TWC), the operator of the Weather Channel smartphone App, for allegedly covertly mining the private data of users and selling the information to third parties, including advertisers.

The Weather Channel App is a mobile phone application that provides users with real-time weather information, weather forecasts, and other information. It was the most downloaded weather application from 2014 to 2017.

The complaint alleges that TWC used the geolocation tracking technology present in the app to monitor where users live, work, and visit, twenty-four hours a day, as well as how much time users spend at each location. The complaint further alleges that TWC led its users to believe that their location data would only be used to provide them with “personalized local weather data, alerts and forecasts.” Instead, TWC allegedly sends this information to affiliates of its parent company, IBM, and other third parties for advertising and other commercial purposes entirely unrelated to the weather. Users' location data could be used to determine users' daily habits, consumer preferences and identities. This information is allegedly used for targeted advertisements by at least a dozen third party websites over the past 19 months based on locations users frequent, and has been by hedge funds interested in analyzing consumer behavior.

The recent news section includes:

- City Attorney Mike Feuer files criminal cases regarding immigration issues.
- City Attorney Mike Feuer files lawsuit alleging the Weather Channel App mines users’ private data without their informed consent.
- City Attorney Mike Feuer secures another conviction against serial LA public transportation groper.
- City Attorney Mike Feuer secures more than $1 million in wage restitution for car wash employees.
- City Attorney Mike Feuer secures an injunction, $50,000 in penalties and restitution against couple for illegally importing, selling exotic animal.
TWC allegedly intentionally obscures information regarding its uses of geolocation data within its 10,000 word Privacy Policy. Because of this, TWC allegedly is able to convince approximately 80% of the Weather Channel App’s users to grant access to geolocation data. TWC allegedly collects more than one billion pieces of location data per week based on user locations.

The lawsuit seeks an injunction prohibiting TWC from continuing to engage in allegedly unfair and fraudulent business activities, including deceptively collecting and selling personal data, as well as Civil Penalties up to $2,500 for each violation.

Feuer’s was the first public office to pursue Wells Fargo over the fake accounts scandal, and maintains a vigorous practice to protect consumers.

Deputy City Attorney Adam Teitelbaum is handling the litigation. Read the complaint here.