

PRESS RELEASE

Department of Consumer Protection
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106



William M. Rubenstein
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 4, 2013

Misleading Grant Deed Offers Resurface in Connecticut *State Tells Consumers There's No Need to Pay High Fees for Property Records*

HARTFORD, March 4 – In a repeat of an alert issued in a May 16th 2012 press release, the Department of Consumer Protection wants to advise consumers to avoid certain businesses that may contact them, purporting to be selling copies of "Grant Deeds." Consumers should be suspicious of any invoices or offers from businesses charging fees for public records that can be easily and inexpensively obtained from a local municipal office.

"We've learned that a company called Property Transfer Service is operating in Connecticut, sending homeowners notices recommending that they obtain their property deeds for a fee of approximately \$80," Consumer Protection Commissioner William M. Rubenstein said. "This company is apparently running the same scheme as Record Retrieval Department, a company that we ousted from Connecticut early this year."

The Department has reviewed one notice sent recently from Property Transfer Service to a Connecticut consumer. That notice included instructions for the consumer to send a check for \$83 in the provided return envelope, which was pre-addressed to Property Transfer Service at a Washington, DC address.

The official-looking document is not affiliated with any municipal, state or federal agency. Property Transfer Service, as well as its sister companies, Secured Document Services and Compliance Document Services are all owned by Neil Camenker of California. In 2011, Camenker's company, State Record Retrieval Board, was enjoined from offering paid grant deed services in Washington state and Iowa. A self-described "multi talented entrepreneur," last year Camenker sued another company, "Secured Document Retrieval Services," in the state of California for copyright infringement based on similarities in the latter's mailings.

"It's intriguing that this schemer, Neil L. Camenker, filed a lawsuit against another schemer for allegedly stealing his methods," Rubenstein said. "We believe that this scheme has no place in Connecticut under any name, and we are in communication with Mr. Camenker and Property Transfer Service to address this matter."

It appears that a handful of operators each run several companies that offer this service under different names, so consumers may see this type of solicitation over and over again from different businesses. The Department of Consumer Protection advises consumers who receive such offers to ignore them or send a copy to the Department of Consumer Protection. Do not remit the requested payment for the Grant Deed.

Anyone in need of property records may access land records at their Town Clerk's Office, or in some cases, online at their municipality's website. Copies of land records typically cost one dollar per page and two dollars for a certified record.

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