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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 2, 2021

Kicking Off National Consumer Protection Week, AG Kaul, DATCP Secretary-designee Romanski Remind Wisconsinites of Robocall Rights

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul and Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary-designee Randy Romanski proudly join government and nonprofit organizations from across the county in celebrating the 23rd annual National Consumer Protection Week by reminding Wisconsinites of their rights related to unwanted robocalls.

“National Consumer Protection Week presents a great opportunity to increase awareness about how Wisconsinites can protect themselves from consumer fraud and abuse,” said AG Kaul. “While robocalls continue to be pervasive, you have rights and options for addressing those unwanted calls.”

“Many consumers have experienced the frustration of getting unwanted robocalls. It’s important to remember the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is here to serve as your resource,” said DATCP Secretary-designee Randy Romanski. “DATCP’s Consumer Protection Hotline is available to help consumers file complaints, navigate business disputes, and find information on a wide variety of consumer-related topics.”

If you answer the telephone and hear a recorded message instead of a live person, it is a robocall. If the recording is a sales message and you have not given your written permission to receive calls from the company, the call is illegal. The best thing to do with a robocall is hang up without saying a word or pressing any buttons. Pressing a button, even to “be removed from the call list” or to “speak with a live operator,” will not produce useful results, it will only confirm to the caller that a live person has been reached and will likely result in even more calls.

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To reduce the number of robocalls you receive, consider contacting your phone carrier to determine if call-blocking is offered, or downloading a call-blocking app. Some apps are free, but others charge a monthly fee. To learn more about blocking unwanted calls, visit the Federal Trade Commission website: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-block-unwanted-calls>

Remember that robocall scammers often capitalize on current events to prey on their victims. No one from a vaccine distribution site, health care provider's office, or pharmacy will call you asking for your Social Security, credit card, or bank account number to sign you up for a COVID-19 vaccine. That is a scam. To learn more about current scams you may subscribe to consumer alerts from the FTC at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFTCCONSUMER/subscriber/new?topic_id=USFTCCONSUMER_8

Consumers should not rely on caller ID to confirm whether a call is legitimate. Scammers can fake ("spoof") the name and number that appears to make it look like the call is from a local number or a government agency. No matter what your caller ID tells you, never give information over the phone unless you initiated the call and are certain you are calling a valid number. Do not call a number supplied by an unsolicited caller. Instead, use a billing statement or other independent source to confirm the correct number. Learn more about protecting yourself from illegal robocalls from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection at their website: <https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Publications/Robocalls300.aspx>

Finally, consider filing a robocall complaint. Filing a complaint may not stop the robocalls, but your information may assist in state and federal investigations. To file a complaint, visit DATCP's Bureau of Consumer Protection at <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov>, send an e-mail to DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov or call the Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800 422-7128.