

Press Release:" Taiwan Changhua District Prosecutors' Office Uncovered a Case of Water Refilling Stations Using Uninspected Groundwater to Counterfeit Puli Spring Water for Vending to the Public"

The Changhua District Prosecutors' Office has recently been apprised of a suspiciously criminal act that a company, under its jurisdiction, exercising vending of underground well water at water refilling stations under the guise of "Puli Spring Water". Instantaneously, the Office formed a special task force, assigning Prosecutor Li Xiu-ling to chair the investigation.

In no time, the task force collected, reviewed and cross-analysed relevant data for any potential evidence for application for a search warrant from the court, which was issued accordingly. On April 22, 2021, Head Prosecutor Wu Yi-ying, Prosecutors Li Hsiu-ling, Liu Chih-wei, Yang Tsung-hui, and Lin Yu-bin commanded Yuanlin Precinct of Changhua County Police Department, Xihu Precinct of Changhua County Police Department, Criminal Investigation Corps of Changhua County Police Department, Puli Precinct of Nantou County Government Police Department and the Prosecutor's Investigators of the Changhua District Prosecutors' Office.

Simultaneously, the task force collaborated with the Changhua County Public Health Bureau, the Central Branch, Bureau of Environmental Inspection, the Water Resources Agency, Ministry of Economic Affairs and other relevant agencies, searched the business premises, water sources and water storage areas of the water refilling stations owner: Unity ○○ Enterprise (located in Changhua County) and its purported water source owner: Peach ○○ Trading Company (located in Nantou County). Afterwards, the Prosecutors summoned the people in charge of the business, employees, and witnesses. Meanwhile, samples were also taken from the water source as well as water storage areas for further laboratory tests.

After investigation, the task force discovered that Unity ○○ Enterprise was entitled to a lawful water refilling station (vehicle) licence, and the water stations denote the water source was groundwater from Puli Township, Nantou County. Nevertheless, to cost down, the company has been pumping up groundwater with equipment from one private well without a water right and another with a registered groundwater right (both located in Xihu Township, Changhua County) filter it through water filtration equipment. Afterwards, the water was stored in large storage tanks and transported by water tankers to "Puli Ganjing Spring Water Renli Station" and other 29 water refilling stations(located in Tianwei Township, Lugang Township, Fuxing Township, Yunlin City, Yongjing Township, Puxin Township, Xihu Township, Puyan

Township, Bitou Township, Zhutang Township, and Erlin Township, Changhua County) operated by Unity ○○ Enterprise. The groundwater, as mentioned above, pumped up from Xihu Township in Changhua County is counterfeitedly labelled as surface water from Puli Township in Nantou County and sold for NT\$10 per 20 litres. Since December 2018, 12,100 metric tons of counterfeited water have been sold to the public, and the illegal proceeds of crime have amounted to over NT\$6 million.

After interrogation, the task force suspected Mr Wu, in charge of Unity ○○ Enterprise, of fraud in the Criminal Code, false labelling of goods, and violation of the Act Governing Food Safety and Sanitation. Mr Wu was therefore ordered to post bail for NT\$500,000 and requested the court to confiscate the proceeds of crime by the Prosecutors.

Water is a precious natural resource that should be made for proper use. Commercial enterprises should provide consumers with water that complies with water rights, relevant water quality standards, regulations, and clear commodity labels. The water quality samples to this case have still undergone testing, and the Changhua District Prosecutors' Office will persist in clarifying this case to safeguard the rights and safety of the public.