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NR 62-13-G **Jaime Garza**

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Riverside County Retailer Sentenced for Sales Tax Evasion

Contact:

Sacramento – The California State Board of Equalization (BOE) announced today that Atulkumar Bhogilal Mehta was sentenced on July 10, 2013 to 120 days in Riverside County jail, placed on felony probation for three years, and ordered to pay \$184,044 in restitution to the BOE.

Mehta was a corporate officer of El Paseo Jewelry Exchange, Inc., a high end jewelry retailer operating in Palm Desert. The BOE's investigation began in 2009 when it was discovered that El Paseo Jewelry Exchange, Inc. provided false records to the state, failed to report sales tax collected, and failed to pay the \$184,044 in sales taxes it had collected from its customers.

On May 2, 2013, Mehta pleaded guilty to one felony count of misappropriation of funds for own use, one felony count of preparing false records, and one felony count of offering false records. The case was prosecuted by the Riverside County District Attorney's Office, Special Prosecution Section.

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The five-member California State Board of Equalization (BOE) is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects more than \$53.7 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes. For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit www.taxes.ca.gov.

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