



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of California

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MARIJUANA SUSPECTS CHARGED WITH SHOOTING AT LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that JOSE ALFREDO ZEPEDA, 19, of East Palo Alto, and CLEMENTE FERRIAS ARROYO, 62, of Morgan Hill, made their initial appearance today in court on an indictment charging them with a conspiracy to manufacture at least 1,000 marijuana plants, the manufacture of at least 1,000 marijuana plants, and possession of firearms and discharge of a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking crimes.

This case is the result of an investigation by the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Lassen County Sheriff's Department, and the Susanville Police Department.

Officers from these agencies were investigating a large outdoor marijuana garden on federal land and encountered three suspected marijuana growers. Suspect Juan Carlos Herrera-Chavez engaged the officers in a gun battle with an AK-47 rifle, wounded the two Lassen County Sheriff's officers, and was later killed by the officers' return gunfire. The two other suspects, ZEPEDA and ARROYO, were arrested after the gun battle. Fortunately, both Lassen County Sheriff's officers are expected to survive their wounds.

If convicted of either of the drug charges, each defendant faces a penalty of a minimum mandatory 10 years to a maximum life in prison, a \$4 million fine, and a minimum five years to life supervised release. Conviction on the charge alleging possession of firearms in furtherance of drug trafficking crimes carries an additional mandatory consecutive five-years-to-life sentence, a \$250,000 fine, and five years supervised release. If a defendant is found criminally responsible for discharging a gun in furtherance of the drug trafficking crimes, an additional five-year consecutive sentence enhancement applies.

The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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