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JUSTICE NEWS

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**Bloomingtondale, Georgia, Landlord to Pay \$680,000 to Settle Housing Discrimination Lawsuit**

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department today announced that Darwin Kenneth Morgan and his company, D.K. Morgan Consolidated LLC, have agreed to pay \$680,000 in monetary damages and civil penalties to settle a Fair Housing Act lawsuit alleging that Morgan discriminated against African-Americans and sexually harassed female tenants and prospective tenants at Morgan Mobile Home Parks in Bloomingtondale, Ga.

Under the consent decree, which the federal district court in Savannah approved today, the defendants must pay \$350,000 to 11 individuals identified by the United States as victims of the defendants' discriminatory conduct, \$280,000 in monetary damages, costs and attorneys' fees to four private plaintiffs, including the Savannah-Chatham County Fair Housing Council, and \$50,000 to the United States as a civil penalty. The consent decree also prohibits the defendants from engaging in discrimination and requires that an independent manager manage the properties.

"It is offensive and illegal to deny equal access to housing based on the color of one's skin or to harass women who are seeking a place to live," said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. "This settlement sends the message that such conduct will not be tolerated, and the Civil Rights Division will aggressively pursue those who engage in it."

"This is an appropriate resolution of this case," said Edward J. Tarver, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia. "The settlement is entirely in keeping with the United States' interest in enforcing the Fair Housing Act."

The lawsuit arose after the Savannah-Chatham County Fair Housing Council alerted the Civil Rights Division to Morgan's discriminatory activities. The government conducted an independent investigation and uncovered additional evidence of discrimination, including more victims of the defendants' conduct. The government's suit, filed in September 2008, alleged, among other things, that Morgan denied the availability of mobile homes and/or mobile home lots to African-American persons while at the same time told white persons about available mobile homes and/or mobile home lots; refused to negotiate with African-American prospective tenants for rental; made statements with respect to the rental of mobile homes and/or mobile home lots at Morgan Mobile Home Parks indicating a preference, a limitation, or discrimination based on race or color; discouraged African-American persons from applying for a mobile home and/or mobile home lot while encouraging white persons to apply; and subjected female tenants and prospective tenants at Morgan Mobile Home Parks to discrimination on the basis of sex, including severe, pervasive and unwelcome sexual harassment. The government's lawsuit was subsequently consolidated with a related private suit that had been brought by the Fair Housing Council and three individuals.

Fighting illegal housing discrimination is a top priority of the Justice Department. The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin and disability.

More information about the Civil Rights Division and the laws it enforces is available at the website [www.justice.gov/crt/](http://www.justice.gov/crt/). Persons who believe they have experienced or witnessed unlawful housing discrimination may call the Housing Discrimination Tip Line at 1-800-896-7743, e-mail the Justice Department at [fairhousing@usdoj.gov](mailto:fairhousing@usdoj.gov), or contact HUD at 1-800-669-9777. More information about the Fair Housing Act can also be found at [www.justice.gov/crt/housing/or/www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.justice.gov/crt/housing/or/www.hud.gov/fairhousing).

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Civil Rights Division