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February 27, 2013

Press Release regarding Colton Harris-Moore

This office recently charged the defendant with Burglary in the Second Degree and Theft in the First Degree for crimes that were committed in Skagit County. Each of Washington's thirty-nine prosecutors are chosen by the voters of their particular county to prosecute crime in a manner that reflects the population that they represent. Except for the unusual occasion where there is a conflict of interest, the elected prosecutor or his/her deputy prosecutors make all of the decisions for their home county.

Mr. Colton Harris-Moore committed a huge amount of crime with restitution amounts not seen except in some very large financial fraud cases. The crimes committed included breaking into people's homes and forever taking away from them the feeling of being safe in their own homes. At some time after the defendant's arrest I met with prosecutors from around the area where we were able to exchange our ideas on how to proceed in dealing with the case. In looking at the sheer volume of crime committed by the defendant, I felt that a sentence within the range the others were talking about was inappropriate. I respect that other prosecutors may see things differently than the Skagit County Prosecuting Attorney. When it became apparent that others did not see these crimes in the same light as me, Skagit County withdrew from negotiations with the defense and indicated that we would proceed in a manner that demanded a serious amount of time in custody for the serious damage this defendant did in the community.

We re-filed our charges on February 8, 2013. I was shocked to learn, through media reports, that the San Juan County prosecutor, in contravention of his authority as the prosecutor for San Juan County, and entered into in an agreement with Mr. Moore's defense attorney to file charges relating to the event that occurred in Skagit County. The sole purpose of this agreement was to circumvent my position that we would not be part of this plea deal which I felt was entirely too lenient. At no time was this office ever consulted or contacted about the case or informed that the defendant had been charged or pled guilty to a SKAGIT COUNTY charge in a county where it did not occur.

In summary, my opinion is that this surreptitious deal between the defense attorney and the San Juan County prosecutor turns the end of "justice" on its head.