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Department of Commerce,
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PRESS RELEASE

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ALASKA DIVISION OF BANKING AND SECURITIES ISSUES A TEMPORARY CEASE AND DESIST ORDER TO METALS.COM

Wednesday, July 29, 2020 (Anchorage) — The Alaska Division of Banking and Securities (DBS) has issued a **temporary cease and desist order** assessing civil penalties against Metals.com and a number of its salespeople. Metals.com, an unregistered firm, is alleged to have engaged in deceptive and misleading sales tactics towards elderly Alaskan investors. Alaskans who have been contacted by Metals.com regarding liquidating their securities in registered firms and investing in precious metals or any other securities transactions are encouraged to contact the DBS at (907) 269-8140 or securities@alaska.gov.

From March of 2019 through today, Metals.com has cold-called potential investors in Alaska and elsewhere to try to convince investors that their money isn't safe in their traditional retirement accounts at registered broker-dealer and investment adviser firms. Metals.com is accused of telling potential investors that they should move their funds to investments in precious metals purchased through Metals.com.

Metals.com and its agents have used fear-based tactics to convince potential customers that investments in precious metals are reliable, provide a better hedge against inflation, and will preserve their value regardless of how the stock market performs. Metals.com targeted elderly investors, with the majority of Metals.com's clients being 65 to 90 years old according to evidence secured by DBS. Through these calls, Metals.com convinced Alaskans to sell nearly \$1.5 million worth of securities in their retirement accounts to invest in precious metals with the company.

"The Division takes these allegations very seriously," said Patrice Walsh, Director of the Division of Banking and Securities. Director Walsh cautions Alaskans from making investment decisions based on unsolicited calls and always recommends reaching out to the Division if they have questions about whether a salesperson or security is properly registered and licensed.

The temporary cease and desist order issued by DBS names TMTE Inc. – which does business as Metals.com and Chase Metals Inc. – and salespeople Walter Vera, Athena Hunter, Sean Reza, Jonathan Sachs, David Bleeden, and Randall Kohl. The referenced firms list addresses in Beverly Hills, California, and in the state of Wyoming. According to the order, Vera, Hunter, Reza, Sachs, Bleeden, and Kohl are acting as unregistered investment adviser representatives

because they are being compensated for advice related to investing in, purchasing, or selling securities without being properly registered in Alaska.

Consider consulting with a trusted investment profession before investing. Contact the Division of Banking and Securities at (907) 269-8140 or securities@alaska.gov to confirm whether the seller and investment are licensed and registered.

NOTE: The Alaska Securities Act authorizes the DBS Director to issue orders against companies and individuals believed to have violated the Act. The allegations are not a finding or order that the respondents have actually violated the Act. Metals.com and the other respondents named in the order have 15 days to request a hearing.

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