



COUNTY OF FRESNO

Lisa A. Smittcamp
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 22, 2020

Fresno County District Attorney's Office Files Seven Felony Counts in Selma Area Arson Spree Committed by Man Released from Custody Due to COVID-19 Emergency Orders

Today, April 22, 2020, the Fresno County District Attorney's Office filed seven (7) felony counts against Owen Aguilar, age 27, of Selma. Aguilar is accused of committing a series of arsons just a few short days after his release from the Fresno County Jail where he was being held pending trial on felony animal cruelty charges. Aguilar's release from custody was due to statewide emergency orders implemented by the Judicial Council to limit the spread of COVID-19 in jail facilities.

After his release from custody on his felony animal cruelty case on Friday, April 10, 2020, Aguilar started a series of fires in the Selma area on Thursday, April 16, 2020. Specifically, Aguilar is accused of starting nine (9) fires in and around the City of Selma. In one instance, Aguilar ignited a tent occupied by a homeless man. Aguilar also set fire to several large commercial dumpsters near businesses, a shopping cart that spread to a detached garage, ignited dry brush, and set fire to debris underneath a SR-99 overpass.

As a result of his arson spree, Aguilar has been charged with one count of PC 451(b) (arson of inhabited property), two counts of PC 451(c) (arson of structure/grassland), and three counts of PC 451(d) (arson of personal property). Aguilar is also charged with one count of PC 453 (possession of an incendiary device with malicious intent). Additionally, each arson charge includes an enhancement alleged pursuant to PC 454(a)(2) (committing an arson during a state of emergency).

If convicted of all charges and enhancements, Aguilar faces a maximum of forty-five (45) years and eight (8) months in state prison.

Aguilar remains in custody at the Fresno County Jail on the new charges and is scheduled to be arraigned on April 23, 2020.

[Aguilar, Owen; 2020-10667]