

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 3, 2025

LA FARGE, Wis – Vernon County Sheriff Roy Torgerson reports a California man has been identified as the source of a threatening telephone call made to leadership of *OrganicEye*, a La Farge area non-profit organization with a *watchdog* mission of oversight in the organic farming movement.

Previous to the threatening telephone call in February 2024, the organization also contacted the Sheriff's Office about receiving emails in late 2023 that were threatening in nature. The Sheriff's Office considers any threat of violence to our community serious and launched a criminal investigation.

In collaboration with technical staff at *OrganicEye* and the Vernon County District Attorney, the Sheriff's Office applied to the court for search warrants to obtain electronic records from two communications originating service providers.

Probable Cause, the legal threshold that must be met to obtain a warrant was established and the warrants were authorized by Vernon County Circuit Court. Upon execution of the search warrants, detectives were led to Gabriel Anthony Autio Ramirez, age 23, of Santa Cruz, California.

The investigation revealed that Ramirez is employed by CCOF, the nation's largest USDA-accredited organic certifier. Shortly before the threats began, *OrganicEye* had filed a formal legal complaint against the organization alleging violation of federal law related to conflicts of interest. The organization cooperated with the investigation. Except for Ramirez, no other actors have been identified so far.

Investigations of this nature take time and effort. Not only would Sheriff Torgerson like to thank the victim for their patience but also recognize the dedication and diligence of the detective assigned to this case. He also extends his appreciation for the collaboration of law enforcement agencies in the state of California.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Sheriff's Office at (608) 637-2123. To remain anonymous and report information about this crime or any other crime, call Vernon County Crime Stoppers at 608-637-TIPS (8477).

Ramirez has not been charged, but the case is being referred to the Office of the Vernon County District Attorney, Angela Palmer-Fisher, for review. Potential charges are Threats to Injure, a Class H felony and/or Unlawful Use of a Telephone, a Class B Misdemeanor. A charge is merely an accusation. Ramirez is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Sheriff Roy Torgerson