

SF, NY Prosecutors Team Up Against Monster Beverage

TERRY COLLINS, Associated Press



This Nov. 19, 2013 file photo shows New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman speaking at a news conference in New York. San Francisco's city attorney and New York's attorney general have joined forces to investigate allegations that Monster Beverage is marketing its highly caffeinated drinks to children. The recently revealed alliance was formed last month, around the same time a federal judge in California tossed out a lawsuit Monster filed seeking to stop San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera's investigation of the energy drink maker. (AP Photo/Richard Drew, file)

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The San Francisco city attorney and New York state attorney general have joined forces to investigate whether Monster Beverage Corp. is marketing its highly caffeinated drinks to children.

The joint probe began last month just before a federal judge in California tossed out a lawsuit filed by Monster seeking to stop an investigation by San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera.

Herrera has filed a lawsuit claiming the drinks pose health risks and accusing the Corona, Calif.-based Monster company of violating state law by misbranding its drinks and marketing them to minors. He began his investigation of Monster in 2012,

Meanwhile, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman has issued subpoenas to Monster and other energy-drink makers as part of his ongoing investigation.

Herrera said he believes the cooperative efforts between the two prosecutors' offices will prove beneficial for the public.

"We are disappointed that Monster has remained defiant in marketing products to children," Herrera said. "We hope this effort will cause the company to correct its

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irresponsible marketing practices."

Monster spokeswoman Tammy Taylor said the energy drinks are not marketed to children and aren't highly caffeinated. A 16-ounce can of Monster contains less than half the caffeine of a similar-sized cup of coffee, she said.

Monster has sold more than 10 billion energy drinks worldwide over 11 years, Taylor added. On its cans, Monster says the beverage is not recommended for children, people sensitive to caffeine, pregnant women or women who are nursing.

Herrera has said coffee is typically served hot and consumed more slowly than energy drinks.

Monster and other popular energy drinks have come under increasing scrutiny. The Food and Drug Administration has been investigating reports of deaths linked to energy drinks, but the agency noted that the reports don't prove the drinks caused the deaths.

Monster has repeatedly said its drinks are safe and it does not know of any fatalities caused by its products.

Schneiderman is also working with San Francisco District Attorney George Gascon and other law enforcement officials nationwide demanding that mobile phone manufacturers create kill switches to combat surging smartphone thefts across the country.

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