

ALABAMA SECURITIES COMMISSION

Post Office Box 304700 Montgomery, Alabama 36130-4700
Telephone: (334) 242-2984 or 1-800-222-1253 Fax: (334) 242-0240
Email: asc@asc.alabama.gov Website: www.asc.alabama.gov

Alabama Investor Loses Over \$40,000 in Pig Butchering Scam

Montgomery, AL (March 24, 2022) – The Alabama Securities Commission (ASC) issued a cease and desist order against WAP.PBPB.VIP and TAO TAO for offering unregistered securities and acting as an unregistered investment adviser. The ASC learned of the scam after receiving a written complaint from an Alabama investor who invested with the cryptocurrency trading platform WAP.PBPB.VIP. The investor lost a total of \$40,588.76. Those familiar with the scheme and perpetrators commonly refer to it with the unfortunate title of the pig butchering scam. Alabama residents are warned that doing business with WAP.PBPB.VIP or TAO TAO and any of the other 650¹ websites owned by TAO TAO will result in significant losses.

“Before investing your hard-earned money, contact the Alabama Securities Commission and ensure the securities being offered are registered and that anyone providing you with financial advice for a fee is registered,” said ASC Director Joseph P. Borg. “Purchasing unregistered investments significantly increases your likelihood of becoming the victim of investment fraud.”

The pig butchering scam is just as dreadful as it sounds. Only in this scam, an unsuspecting person’s hard-earned cash is on the chopping block. Con artists will build a relationship with the victims, by peppering them with extremely polished lies, in order to execute the scam that leaves victims with nothing.

The scam happens when fraudsters send phishing messages through social media platforms and communication apps. To further entice individuals to respond to their messages, the fraudster uses stock photos of an attractive person for their profile. Once the victim responds to the message, the con artist will begin to build a relationship with them. Through conversation, the fraudster casually mentions their wealth and cryptocurrency. When the user takes interest in crypto investing/currency, the fraudster strikes. The victim will be instructed to deposit funds and falsified returns will be shown on their account. When the victim attempts to withdraw their money, they are typically told to deposit additional funds or that they must pay certain taxes or fees. Once the alleged fees are deposited, they are gone too along with the rest of the money.

The ASC cautions investors to thoroughly research any investment opportunity. Call the ASC at 1-800-222-1253 and ask for the registration department to check out persons offering investment opportunities, investment advice for a fee and any products they offer. Contact the ASC to report suspected fraud, inappropriate securities business practices, or to obtain consumer

¹ Names of the other 650 websites are available as Exhibit A in the official order on the ASC website <https://asc.alabama.gov/Orders/2022/CD-2022-0005.pdf>.

information. Free investor education and fraud prevention materials are available at www.asc.alabama.gov.

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For further information contact 1-800-222-1253 and ask for Public Affairs.

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