



BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



MICHAEL L. RAMSEY
District Attorney

MARK MURPHY
Chief Deputy District Attorney

JASON WINES
Chief Investigator

PRESS RELEASE

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Repeat Drunk Driver Violated Probation Claims Drank Alcohol to Alert Authorities to Loosen Ankle Monitor

A 63-year-old Chico woman who committed four driving under the influence offenses this past fall in less than four months was ordered to state prison for a diagnostic study after violating her grant of formal probation after just ten days.

Gail Ann Hemmingsen, 63, of Chico, had previously pleaded no contest to four separate DUI offenses and a misdemeanor offense of attempted criminal threats. The multiple DUI offenses and criminal threats stem from a string of drunken incidents Hemmingsen accumulated between September and November of 2022.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said that on Wednesday, January 25, 2023, Hemmingsen was sentenced to five years formal probation and released from jail after serving two months with terms that she abstain from alcohol and wear a continuous alcohol monitoring ankle bracelet.

Hemmingsen's ankle monitor was installed on her ankle on February 3, 2023, per orders of the Butte County Probation Department. The following day, her monitor alerted positive for alcohol consumption at approximately 0.10% BAC; then again on February 5th at about 0.08% BAC; and then again on February 6th at about 0.22% BAC. Hemmingsen was subsequently arrested by probation officers on February 7, 2023, and put in jail.

Before the judge gave his order today, Hemmingsen attempted to justify her drinking by telling him that her monitor was too tight on her ankle causing her extreme pain. She explained she drank because she could not reach the monitor company or her probation officer so she drank to alert someone to respond to loosen it.

The judge rejected her excuse and ordered her to state prison where she will undergo diagnostic and psychological testing for up to 90 days. At the end of that period, a report will be produced by the prison authorities and she will be returned to court to face resentencing on her charges. She faces a return to state prison of up to three years.