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NEWS RELEASE

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Man Charged with Killing Girl in Taco Stand Crash While Driving on Nitrous Oxide

A man has been charged with killing a young girl in a car crash at a taco stand while he was driving under the influence of nitrous oxide last year, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Joe Louis Perez (dob 12/12/95) of Boyle Heights was charged with one felony count each of gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated and driving under the influence of a drug causing injury. The charges include allegations of causing great bodily injury.

He is scheduled to be arraigned today in Department 30 of the Foltz Criminal Justice Center. Case BA471919 was filed for arrest warrant on Oct. 5.

On Nov. 10, 2017, Perez was driving a car on Whittier Boulevard in Boyle Heights when he allegedly collided with a parked vehicle near Marietta Street, prosecutors said. The impact caused the second car to go over the curb and hit a group of people gathered at a taco stand, killing 11-year-old Elektra Yopez, a resident of the neighborhood.

The girl's mother and two aunts also were injured in the crash. None of the four passengers who were in the defendant's vehicle was seriously injured.

Perez is accused of driving under the influence of nitrous oxide, commonly known as laughing gas, resulting in the collision, prosecutors said. He was arrested at the scene.

Perez faces a possible maximum sentence of 13 years and eight months in state prison if convicted as charged. Prosecutors are recommending bail be set at \$230,000.

The case is being prosecuted by the DUI Training and Prosecution Section (DTAPS).

The case remains under investigation by the Los Angeles Police Department, Central Traffic Division.

About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.