



**For Immediate Release**

WHITEFISH, MONT. (April 28, 2026). After mediation with Federal Magistrate Katherine DeSoto, the City of Whitefish has reached a settlement agreement in the case of *Beker Rengifo Del Castillo v. City of Whitefish, et al.*, filed in the United States District Court, Missoula Division.

On April 24, 2025, Whitefish Police Officer Michael Hingiss conducted a traffic stop involving Mr. Del Castillo for a broken taillight. The traffic stop lasted approximately 14 minutes. During the course of the traffic stop, U.S Customs and Border Patrol, who were not parties to the lawsuit, responded to the scene. While Mr. Del Castillo was only issued a warning by Officer Hingiss for the broken taillight, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol detained Mr. Del Castillo after Officer Hingiss cleared the traffic stop. Mr. Del Castillo was later released from custody.

Under the terms of the settlement agreement, there is no admission of wrongdoing by the City. The City stands firmly behind its local law enforcement officers who are tasked with performing an increasingly difficult job in rapidly changing circumstances, both on a state and federal level. The agreed upon settlement amount of \$90,000 will be paid by the City's insurance provider, Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority.

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