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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MAN SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS- LIFE FOR SECOND
DEGREE MURDER**

Victor Santos Garcia, 32, of Merced, was sentenced to 15 years to life by Merced County Judge Carol Ash on Friday, March 16, 2018 for second degree murder and driving while intoxicated with gross negligence, for a 2016 crash that killed 67-year-old Elena Maciel Garcia (no relation) of Newman, announced the Merced County District Attorney's office.

A Merced County jury found Garcia guilty of second degree murder and driving while intoxicated with negligence on January 19, 2018.

Testimony at trial showed that on March 30, 2016, at about 7:30 p.m., the defendant was driving a 2003 Chevrolet Tahoe westbound on a two-lane road, Highway 140 near Central Avenue at about 103 miles per hour. The speed limit on that street is 55 mph. Elena Garcia was driving eastbound at or near the speed limit. Garcia entered into the eastbound lane while he was attempting to pass other cars and crashed head-on into Elena Garcia's 2015 Toyota Corolla, and she was killed instantly. Victor Garcia's blood alcohol level was .17% four hours after the crash.

"Based on the facts and the law, we are satisfied with the sentence," said Tomas Min, one of the two deputy district attorneys who jointly prosecuted the case. Gerad Egan was the second prosecutor on the case.

Victor Garcia had two prior arrests for driving under the influence prior to March of 2016. On February 7, 2016 in Merced County where his BAC was found to be .22%, and a second in on April 22, 2014 in Madera County where his BAC was found to be .16%. Victor Garcia had never applied to the Department of Motor Vehicles for a driver's license and his right to apply for a driver's license was suspended on the date of the fatal crash.