



Department of Justice

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FORMER FULTON COUNTY INSPECTOR SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR SOLICITING AND TAKING BRIBES

ATLANTA, GA - DON MITCHELL, 56, of Atlanta, Georgia, a former Fulton County, Georgia, erosion control inspector, was sentenced today to ten months in prison in federal district court for soliciting and taking cash and other bribes from a contractor whose work MITCHELL was inspecting for the County.

United States Attorney Nahmias said, "Mitchell defrauded the citizens of Fulton County and compromised the important work of his office. This case demonstrates, once again, that corrupt public officials face federal prosecution and imprisonment. We continue to encourage anyone who has been solicited to pay bribes to government officials to come forward and report these serious crimes to the FBI."

MITCHELL was sentenced to ten months in prison, with the last five months to be served in a halfway house, and ordered to serve 2 years of supervised release.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: MITCHELL was an inspector with the Fulton County Erosion and Sedimentation Control Division. On three occasions in March and April 2007, MITCHELL solicited and accepted bribes from a grading contractor based in Marietta, Georgia, which MITCHELL had ticketed for alleged violations. The bribes included two cash payments totaling \$1,000 as well as a \$100 gift card to Red Lobster. MITCHELL solicited and received these payments from the contractor in exchange for promising to inform the judge, at the upcoming hearing on the tickets MITCHELL issued, that the contractor had resolved the problems.

The contractor made two illegal payments – the \$100 gift card and one payment of \$500 cash – before notifying the authorities. But after MITCHELL solicited the contractor a third time, for more cash, the contractor called the FBI. FBI agents then set up an undercover operation in which one of the contractor's owners met with and paid MITCHELL an additional \$500 cash at a local restaurant, while wearing a concealed FBI audio recorder and while agents surveilled the meeting from the parking lot. The FBI also recorded a telephone call about the payoff between MITCHELL and the contractor,

with the contractor's consent.

The contractor, who notified the authorities and cooperated in the investigation, has not been charged. MITCHELL was indicted in May 2007, and pleaded guilty on July 9, 2007. MITCHELL resigned from his county position after he was indicted on the charges.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Assistant United States Attorney Justin S. Anand prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.