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## **SULPHUR WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL CHARGES**

### *Defendant Conspired to Transport Illegal Aliens*

**LAKE CHARLES, LA.:** United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced that **JOAN COMEAUX**, age 55, of Sulphur, Louisiana, pleaded guilty today before United States District Judge Patricia Minaldi in U.S. District Court in Lake Charles, Louisiana, to one count of conspiracy to transport illegal aliens. Sentencing has been set for February 6, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

An indictment was returned by the Western District of Louisiana Federal Grand Jury on August 13, 2008, charging COMEAUX, along with five other defendants, with conspiracy to transport illegal aliens. Pursuant to this federal indictment, all six defendants were arrested on August 19, 2008. Following initial appearances, the defendants were released on bond pending the trial.

COMEAUX admitted that she conspired with the co-defendants listed in the indictment to transport illegal aliens from the Texas and Mexico border area to other locations within Texas, and that she knew the aliens came into the United States illegally. COMEAUX further admitted that she instructed her co-defendants in this case on the procedure to transport the illegal aliens and the recruiting process took place in the Western District of Louisiana.

The investigation by the Office of Immigrations and Custom Enforcement, Lake Charles, LA (ICE), FBI, Border Patrol, Louisiana State Police, Sulphur Police Department and Calcasieu Parish Sheriff's Office revealed that all of the defendants were transporting illegal aliens from the Texas and Mexico border, and according to the indictment, all defendants would participate in the driving of the illegal aliens.

COMEAX faces an imprisonment term of not more than five years, a fine up to \$250,000.00, and a term of supervised release following imprisonment of not more than three years. Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James T. McManus.

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