



Department of Justice

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BEAUMONT MAN SENTENCED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES

BEAUMONT, TX –United States Attorney Rebecca A. Gregory announced today that a Beaumont business executive has been sentenced to 8 months in federal prison for environmental crimes in the Eastern District of Texas.

JOHN CHARLES "CHUCK" MAZoch, 47, of Beaumont, pleaded guilty on March 31, 2008 to the felony offense of conspiring with others to store, transport, and dispose of hazardous wastes without a permit in violation of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and was sentenced on August 28, 2008 by United States District Judge Marcia Crone. In addition to serving 8 months in federal prison, Mazoch was ordered to pay a \$500,000 fine and over \$700,000 in restitution to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). Mazoch must also serve 8 months of home confinement and 3 years supervised release once he is released from prison. The judge furthermore ordered that Mazoch not engage in business that involves the transportation, storage, or disposal of hazardous wastes while he's on supervised release.

On May 22, 2007, two of Mazoch's former employees, at Coastal Welding Supply, **JAMES HEBERT**, 48, of Sulphur, Louisiana, and **STEVEN MARK SAMPLE**, 43, of Clever, Missouri, also pleaded guilty to participating in the conspiracy. Hebert was sentenced to serve 6 months home confinement as a condition of a 5 year term of probation. He was further ordered to pay a \$10,000.00 fine, and perform 200 hours of community services. Sample was sentenced to serve 6 months home confinement as a condition of a 3 year term of probation. He was further ordered to pay a \$5,000.00 fine, and perform 200 hours of community service. Both Sample and Hebert were also held liable for the entire restitution figure, but it's expected that Mazoch will pay the sum in full pursuant to his plea agreement with the government. Hebert and Sample received reduced sentences as a result of the government's motion on grounds that they had been cooperative and assisted with the government's investigation.

According to information presented in court during the sentencing hearings, investigators with the EPA and the LDEQ uncovered the conspiracy in January 2006 when they discovered approximately 555 compressed gas cylinders, containing various types of industrial gases, in a self storage facility in Sulphur, Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana. The investigators determined that the storage unit in question had been rented in April 2005 by Hebert. Investigators later learned that in March 2005, Mazoch had paid Hebert \$30,000.00 to take possession of the cylinders and remove them from Coastal Welding Supply's facility in Sulphur, Louisiana. Sample participated in the scheme by coordinating the \$30,000 payment to Hebert and by signing off on a document that purported that Coastal Welding Supply was "selling" the cylinders to Hebert for \$10.00.

The judge further ordered that \$100,000.00 of the restitution funds be paid as follows: \$40,000 to a

Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana environmental project, \$25,000 to the LDEQ Criminal Investigations Contingency Account, \$25,000 to the Louisiana State Police Emergency Response program, and \$10,000 to the Southern Environmental Enforcement Network.

"Hazardous wastes must be managed and disposed of properly and safely to protect the public and the environment," said Warren Amburn, Special Agent in Charge of EPA's Criminal Investigation Division in Dallas. "Individuals who conspire to break the law will be prosecuted."

The case was investigated by the EPA's - Criminal Investigation Division (CID), Baton Rouge office and the LDEQ's CID, Baton Rouge office. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jim Noble.

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