



# Department of Justice

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**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2008**  
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## **Mississippi Hazardous Waste Operator Sentenced to 41 Months in Prison for Environmental Crimes**

WASHINGTON— Dennie Eugene Pridemore was sentenced today in U.S. District Court in Natchez, Miss. to 41 months in prison and 3 years probation for illegally storing and disposing hazardous waste, the Justice Department and Environmental Protection Agency announced.

Pridemore pleaded guilty on Nov. 15, 2007 to a six-count indictment charging him with operating a sham hazardous waste recycling facility under the name Hydromex, Inc., in Yazoo City, Miss. He pleaded guilty to illegally storing and disposing of hazardous waste at the Yazoo City site, and for making false statements to state and federal regulatory officials and investigators in an effort to conceal his illegal disposal of the waste.

The indictment charged him with having disposed of hazardous waste contaminated with the heavy metals, cadmium, chromium and lead that he had been paid to recycle into marketable products. Pridemore admitted that instead of doing so, he buried the wastes in trenches and produced products that leached heavy metals into the surrounding soil and groundwater. The indictment alleged that the products produced at the Hydromex plant were useless and made only to create the illusion that the company was legitimately recycling hazardous waste in accordance with federal and state environmental laws.

In a further effort to conceal his failure to properly recycle hazardous waste, Pridemore created false documents making it appear to regulators that he had customers for the products he claimed to be making and selling.

“The defendant attempted to deceive regulators into believing that he was legitimately and safely recycling hazardous waste into useful products when, in fact, he was illegally disposing of the waste and contaminating the environment,” said Ronald J. Tenpas, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department’s Environment and Natural Resources Division. “The defendant’s conviction illustrates how deceit and concealment often accompany environmental violations and when discovered will be aggressively prosecuted.”

“Mr. Pridemore deliberately concealed the fact that he illegally disposed of millions of pounds of hazardous waste containing toxic metals,” said Fred Burnside, Special Agent in Charge of EPA Criminal Investigation Division’s Atlanta Area Office. “Today’s sentence demonstrates our commitment to vigorously enforce those who intentionally violate environmental laws.”

This case was prosecuted by Jeremy Korzenik, Senior Trial Attorney for the Justice Department’s Environmental Crimes Section and Jay Golden, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi, and investigated by David McLeod, Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the EPA’s Criminal Investigation Division, Atlanta.

