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PRESS RELEASE

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Operators of Leigh and Sons, LLC Sentenced in Document Falsification Investigation

BALTIMORE, MD (October 27, 2022) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that Jack Thomas Leigh and Jack Loson Leigh, both of North Potomac, pleaded guilty to five counts of making false statements in required filings to the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). The false statements concerned the disposal of fats, oils, and grease waste. Prince George’s County Circuit Court Judge Nicholas E. Rattal sentenced Jack Thomas Leigh to two years of incarceration, all suspended but one weekend, five years of supervised probation, and ordered him to complete 100 hours of community service. Jack Loson Leigh was sentenced to two years of incarceration, all suspended, five years of supervised probation, and ordered to complete 24 hours of community service.

The Leighs operate Leigh & Sons, LLC, a company providing waste grease removal services to commercial facilities. The removal, transport, and disposal of sewage and waste oils and greases are regulated by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Waste haulers are required to submit records identifying where waste originated, the volume, and location of disposal. Wastewater treatment plants control the amount of waste disposed of at their facilities and often refuse waste collected outside their jurisdictional boundaries. The introduction of unexpected or extra fats, oil, and grease waste can upset the treatment systems and cause failures and improper treatment.

In July of 2019, the WSSC alerted the Environmental Protection Agency’s Criminal Investigation Division (EPA-CID) of inconsistencies and irregularities in a large batch of waste disposal manifests submitted by Leigh & Sons, LLC. The manifests claimed that waste collected in Montgomery County was being disposed of in Frederick County. However, an investigation revealed the company had not used the Frederick County facility since 2014. That same month, EPA-CID Agents interviewed the Leighs. When confronted, the Leighs acknowledged the falsifications.

However, Leigh & Sons, LLC continued submitting falsified manifests to WSSC throughout 2020 and 2021, claiming the waste was disposed of in various other jurisdictions. An investigation revealed no records or limited records supporting those claims. For example, Leigh & Sons, LLC submitted 16 manifests claiming waste was disposed of in Baltimore City during a

time when the facility was not accepting any private waste. In total, Jack Thomas Leigh and Jack Loson Leigh submitted over 200 falsified documents, even after notice from EPA-CID as well as notice of the pending criminal action by the Maryland Office of the Attorney General.

“Improper disposal of sewage, fats, oils, and grease pollutes our waterways and endangers the Chesapeake Bay,” said Attorney General Frosh. “Proper tracking of those pollutants is vital to our efforts to keep Maryland water safe and clean. The Leighs were informed they were violating the law yet willfully continued to file falsified documents.”

“By continually falsifying documents to wastewater treatment operators, the defendants jeopardized the safety measures established by regulators to protect human health and the environment,” said Jennifer Lynn, Special Agent in Charge for EPA-CID in the Mid-Central Area Branch. “EPA and its law enforcement partners worked together to identify and hold these defendants accountable for their illegal actions.”

In making today’s announcement, Attorney General Frosh thanked the Environmental Protection Agency’s Criminal Investigation Division, specifically Agents Allison Landsman and William Stull who worked on the case, and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission. Attorney General Frosh also thanked the Environmental Crimes Unit for its work on the case, specifically Assistant Attorney General Kory H. Lemmert, who prosecuted the case.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2022/102722a.pdf>