



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Lafourche Parish man sentenced to jail and to pay \$50,000 restitution for environmental crime, theft and criminal damage to property

BATON ROUGE – Yesterday, a Lafourche Parish man, who was arrested in September 2014 by the Criminal Investigation Division of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality for the illegal discharge of diesel fuel into state waterways, pled guilty to this charge in the 17th Judicial District Court in Thibodaux.

Garrett Gilliam, 42, of Cutoff, pleaded guilty to illegal discharge of a pollutant into state waterways, theft and criminal damage to property. Judge John E. LeBlanc of the 17th Judicial District Court sentenced Gilliam to three years imprisonment, the statutory maximum for illegal discharge into state waterways. Gilliam was also sentenced to 10 years for the theft of the diesel fuel, 10 years for criminal damage to property, and was ordered to pay \$50,000 in restitution to Lafourche Parish. The sentences will run concurrently, so Gilliam will serve a total of 10 years in prison.

Gilliam was originally arrested by Lafourche Parish Sheriff's deputies on Aug. 26, 2014, for stealing diesel fuel from a pump station located off La. 652 in Raceland sometime between Aug. 23 and Aug. 24, 2014. After his arrest, Gilliam admitted to deputies that he stole diesel and intentionally discharged some of it near the pump station to make his stolen load light enough to transport.

Following the arrest, Lafourche Parish Sheriff's deputies contacted criminal investigators with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality about the incident. As the result of their ongoing investigation, DEQ investigators booked Gilliam with an additional felony charge of knowingly discharging a pollutant to state waterways.

The case was prosecuted by District Attorney Camille A. "Cam" Morvant and Assistant District Attorney Heather Hendrix.

"This office takes crimes against the environment seriously. The waterways of Lafourche Parish are sacred and dear to our community and they must be protected for the current and future generations," said Morvant.

"Environment crimes are real crimes and this sentence should send a message that polluters will be prosecuted and will go to jail," said Mike Daniels, attorney for DEQ's Criminal Investigation Division. "It was a privilege to work with District Attorney Morvant and Assistant District Attorney Hendrix."

"This is an example of local, state, and federal law enforcement working with DEQ to combat environmental crimes and protect the state's natural resources," said Keith Bates, criminal investigator with DEQ's Criminal Investigation Division. "We encourage all law enforcement to contact us whenever they discover these types of crimes."

The mission of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is to protect the environment and public health. Any persons with knowledge of any spills, releases, odors, fish kills, open burning, waste tires and any other types of environmental incidents may contact the department at 225-219-3640 or toll-free at 1-888-763-5424.