



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### **New Jersey man and Louisiana man plead guilty to illegal disposal of wastes**

**BATON ROUGE** – A New Jersey man and a Sulphur man were sentenced Thursday, Sept. 17, in the 31st Judicial District Court for violating Louisiana waste disposal laws and the Environmental Quality Act. George L. Ryals III, 63, of Newton, N.J., and Michael Anaker, 57, of Sulphur, illegally disposed of a large number of compressed gas cylinders by abandoning them in a warehouse in Roanoke.

Investigators with the Criminal Investigation Division of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) arrested Ryals and Anaker in June 2014 for illegal disposal of harmful substances.

In 2009, Ryals, President of Stillwater Consultants LLC and Anaker, his employee, abandoned a large number of compressed gas cylinders at a warehouse leased by Stillwater at 8050 Bryan Road, in Roanoke in Jefferson Davis Parish.

The owner of the leased warehouse, Crop Production Services (CPS), evicted Stillwater Consultants in June 2009 for failure to pay rent. In July 2009, representatives of CPS visited the property and found that over 500 compressed gas cylinders and several drums of waste oil had been abandoned inside the warehouse. Under LDEQ regulations, abandonment of wastes is considered an illegal disposal.

In August 2009, the Louisiana State Police, Emergency Services Unit, (LSP/ESU), made entry into the warehouse and found cylinders containing chlorine, cyanogen chloride, cyanogen, phosgene, sodium cyanide and hydrogen cyanide. Many of the cylinders were in poor, deteriorating condition, and in danger of leaking.

Due to the hazards discovered onsite, the LDEQ issued a Declaration of Emergency Aug. 14, 2009, which required CPS to mitigate and remove the substances that may threaten the health, safety and welfare of nearby citizens. CPS cooperated fully with the subsequent cleanup and investigation.

Agents from LSP, the United States Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division and the New Jersey Attorney General's Office also participated in the investigation.

Ryals and Anaker each pleaded guilty in the 31st Judicial District Court and were sentenced. In accepting Ryals and Anaker's pleas, 31st Judicial District Judge C. Steve Gunnell ordered Ryals to pay a \$1,000 fine and \$24,000 in restitution to the responding agencies. Anaker was sentenced to a \$500 fine and \$1,000 in restitution to the responding agencies.

The case was prosecuted by District Attorney Michael C. Cassidy, Assistant District Attorney Kevin Millican, and Special Assistant District Attorney Michael Daniels, LDEQ's Criminal Enforcement Counsel.

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