

NEWS

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lian0206.rel
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FAA Contractor Admits Bribing Former Government Employee

(More)

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TRENTON – A Federal Aviation Administration contractor and former employee of the FAA’s William J. Hughes Technical Center in Atlantic County pleaded guilty today to paying more than \$23,000 in bribes to a former FAA employee, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Maria Lianidis, 44, of Linwood, president of Digital Management Systems, Inc. (DMS), a computer engineering company based in Absecon, admitted that she paid cash bribes to Darrell Woods, who was at the time an FAA program manager. Woods’ responsibilities included participating in the creation of FAA contract solicitations and overseeing the performance of DMS on government contracts that DMS obtained with Woods’ assistance. In making the corrupt payments, Lianidis admitted that she sought to influence Woods in the performance of his official duties as an FAA employee.

Lianidis admitted before U.S. District Judge Garrett E. Brown, Jr. that, on three separate instances in early 2003, she gave Woods a total of more than \$23,000 in cash, as described in Counts 2, 3 and 4 of the Indictment returned against her in August. Woods pleaded guilty on June 13, 2007, to one count of wire fraud and one count of money laundering related to the bribery and contract-steering scheme. Woods was released on a \$250,000 bond and awaits sentencing.

Judge Brown scheduled sentencing for Lianidis for May 12. Lianidis is free on \$200,000 bond until sentencing.

“Contracting fraud within the Department of Transportation is one of the Inspector General’s top priorities, and we are committed to ensuring that all contracts are awarded in a fair and competitive manner, and not as the result of bribery or other corrupt practices,” said Ned Schwartz, Special Agent in Charge of the DOT OIG New York Regional Office.

“IRS Special Agents are specifically trained to investigate ill-gotten gains derived from criminal activity and will continue to devote their financial expertise to uncovering concealed illegal financial transactions,” said William P. Offord, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service’s Criminal Investigation Division in New York.

Each of the three counts of bribery carries a maximum statutory penalty of 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. In determining an actual sentence, however, Judge Brown must consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, including all conduct relevant to the commission of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The Indictment against Lianidis includes a forfeiture allegation notifying the defendant of the government's intention to seek forfeiture of criminal proceeds derived from the scheme. The amount of forfeiture will be determined by the Court at the time of sentencing.

Christie credited Special Agents of the Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent In Charge Ned Schwartz in New York, and the IRS Criminal Investigations Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William P. Offord, with the investigation that resulted in the guilty pleas of Lianidis and Woods.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney David A. Bocian and Hope S. Olds of the U.S. Attorney's Special Prosecutions Division.

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Defense Attorneys: Edward Reif, Esq., Philadelphia.
Joseph Santaguida, Esq., Philadelphia.