



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Mississippi

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MISSISSIPPI MAN SENTENCED FOR WIRE FRAUD

Gulfport, Miss. – Vester Ray Bassham, 46, of Gautier, Mississippi, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Louis Guirola, Jr. to serve five months in federal prison followed by five months home confinement with electronic monitoring and three years of supervised release for wire fraud in connection with the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, announced U.S. Attorney Gregory K. Davis. Bassham was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$26,000.

Bassham knowingly devised and carried out a scheme to defraud the Gulf Coast Claims Facility established by BP Exploration and Production, Inc. to administer, process, and settle certain claims of individuals and businesses that had been impacted by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. The investigation revealed that Bassham made false representations in his claim for damages by alleging that he lost earnings and profits and work hours as an electrician providing services for Torguson Construction, LLC, in Jackson County, Mississippi, as a result of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. As a result of his scheme, Bassham caused \$26,000.00 to be wired and deposited into his bank account in Biloxi, Mississippi.

The case was investigated by agents of the United States Secret Service, and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrea Jones.

This case was also brought as part of this District's partnership with the National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF), a nationwide initiative to protect available funds and assistance for those victims of both natural and man-made disasters such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes and the recent Gulf oil spill. If you have knowledge of fraud, waste, abuse, or allegations of mismanagement involving disaster relief operations, you can contact the NCDF by either calling the hotline at [\(866\) 720-5721](tel:8667205721), faxing [\(225\) 334-4707](tel:2253344707), emailing at disaster@leo.gov or in writing to National Center for Disaster Fraud, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-4909.

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