



NEWS RELEASE

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**ALASKA ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER PLED GUILTY TO A CRIMINAL VIOLATION
OF THE BALD AND GOLDEN EAGLE PROTECTION ACT AND WAS SENTENCED TO PAY
\$125,000 IN CRIMINAL PENALTIES**

Anchorage, Alaska – United States Attorney Nelson P. Cohen announced today, July 16, 2008, that Alaska Electric Light and Power (AEL&P) pled guilty in federal court to a criminal violation of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act for destroying a Bald Eagle nest during construction of the Dorothy Lake Hydroelectric project in southeast Alaska.

AEL&P pled guilty to a one-count information and was sentenced to pay a fine of \$50,000, to pay community service of \$50,000 dedicated to raptor rehabilitation in southeast Alaska and \$25,000 to be paid in restitution to the U.S. Forest Service for the destruction of a historical cabin that also occurred during blasting.

AEL&P will serve 18 months of probation during which it has agreed to update a Juneau area raptor study completed in 2001 and ensure that any recommendations are carried out on any new facilities to ensure avian protection. AEL&P will also undertake education of its employees, agents and contractors regarding obligations under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

As part of the permit for the project issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, AEL&P was required to take precautions during construction regarding bald eagles and bald eagle nests to minimize impact to the bald eagles in the area and comply with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Nonetheless, during blasting on the project, a tree known to contain a bald eagle nest was destroyed as a result of AEL&P's wanton disregard for the consequences of its acts. AEL&P was warned repeatedly that it was required to protect the tree but failed to take adequate precautions. AEL&P was required to have an environmental compliance monitor on site during blasting and yet he was not there on the two occasions that the blasting damaged and then destroyed the tree and nest. This incident occurred after AEL&P's request for permission to take the tree with the bald eagle nest had been denied by the Department of Interior.

During the investigation it was also discovered that AEL&P was not in compliance with certain Clean Water Act requirements. These violations were resolved through a civil resolution with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. Cohen stated, "The U.S. Attorney's Office is committed to protecting Alaska's natural resources and wildlife. We will continue to work closely with our law enforcement partners to protect them."

“Alaska has abundant natural resources available for development and it is home to tremendous wildlife resources. As the state develops its resources, we need to ensure that the wildlife and the wild places they call home are fully protected. With this plea agreement, AEL&P has taken responsibility for its actions and has agreed to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to protect wildlife,” said Special Agent in Charge for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement in Alaska, Stan Pruszenski.

This case was investigated jointly by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service with assistance from the Environmental Protection Agency. The prosecutor in this case was Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrea T. Steward. Mr. Cohen commends the investigators for their efforts in this case.

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