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OWNER OF FISHING COMPANY PLEADS GUILTY TO FINANCING NETWORK OF HIGH-TECH MARIJUANA GROW FACILITIES IN THREE STATES

PHILADELPHIA – A Philadelphia man pleaded guilty yesterday for his role in organizing and financing a network of high-tech, indoor marijuana grow facilities stretching from Florida to Connecticut, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Zane David Memeger for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and DEA Special Agent-in-Charge John J. Bryfonski of the Philadelphia Field Office.

Anthony Bui, 57, of Philadelphia, owner of Asian Fish Inc. of Egg Harbor, N.J., pleaded guilty to conspiracy to manufacture more than 1,000 marijuana plants, conspiracy to distribute more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana, and conspiracy to launder monetary instruments. Bui was indicted April 8, 2009.

According to court documents, on June 30, 2005, one of Bui's marijuana grow facilities in Staley, N.C., caught fire. When volunteer firefighters arrived, they discovered that Bui and his associates were in the process of converting a former chicken warehouse into a massive marijuana grow operation. The firefighters then called the Randolph County, N.C., Sheriff's Department, who arrested Bui and two associates. The deputy sheriffs also seized more than 600 marijuana plants and tens of thousands of dollars worth of equipment.

Additional investigation by DEA agents led to the discovery of three additional marijuana grow facilities in Jacksonville, Fla., New Britain, Conn., and Birdsboro, Penn. According to court documents, Bui set up the facility in New Britain for his son, and his son's friend. The facility in Birdsboro was capable of producing 25 pounds of marijuana every few weeks. Each pound of marijuana could be sold for approximately \$2,500. On June 25, 2007, DEA agents executed a search warrant at the Birdsboro facility. According to court documents, the entire house had been turned into a marijuana grow facility. The first floor bedroom contained the nursery for the youngest plants, with another room on the first floor serving as a secondary grow room with mid-level plants. The entire basement had been converted into a final grow room for the most mature plants.

Bui used the proceeds from his marijuana distribution activities to finance his marijuana manufacturing operations. In addition, Bui used his commercial fishing company, Asian Fish, to disguise the source of the funds for the marijuana grow facilities. According to court documents,

Bui invested tens of thousands of dollars from Asian Fish to purchase property and equipment for these and other marijuana grow facilities across the eastern seaboard.

To date, more than a dozen members of Bui's organization have been successfully investigated and prosecuted.

Sentencing is scheduled for Jan. 11, 2011. Bui faces a maximum sentence of life in prison with a mandatory minimum prison sentence of 10 years on the manufacturing conspiracy charge and on the distribution charge, as well as a fine of up to \$4 million per count. He faces a maximum prison sentence of 20 years on the conspiracy to launder monetary instruments charge, as well as a fine of up to \$500,000.

The case was prosecuted by Trial Attorney Robert J. Livermore of the Criminal Division's Organized Crime and Racketeering Section. The case was investigated by special agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration, with assistance from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, the Randolph County Sheriffs Department in North Carolina, the Birdsboro Police Department in Pennsylvania, the New Britain and East Hartford Police Departments in Connecticut, and the Pennsylvania State Police.

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