

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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PROPERTY DEVELOPER INDICTED FOR EXPOSING EMPLOYEES TO ASBESTOS DURING REMOVAL OPERATIONS

ROCHESTER, N.Y.— U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that a grand jury has returned a two-Count Indictment charging Anastasios “Taso” Kolokouris, 28, of Avon, N.Y., with violating the Clean Air Act asbestos work practice standards involving asbestos removal and disturbance. Each charge carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Craig R. Gestring, who is handling the case, stated that the defendant is an owner of a warehouse located at 920 Exchange Street, Rochester. Acting on a complaint, an inspector from the New York State Department of Labor, Asbestos Control Bureau visited the property on December 13, 2011. The inspector observed people working in a large dumpster next to a loading dock, and large quantities of material that resembled asbestos in and around the dumpster.

Authorities thereafter obtained a federal search warrant and seized over 90 bags of dry, friable asbestos from inside the warehouse. Samples of the material were analyzed by a lab, and tested positive for asbestos. Kolokouris is alleged to have hired several civilian workers without any asbestos training or experience to clean out the dumpster and load it into bags.

The Indictment is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Criminal Investigation Division, under the direction of Special Agent-In-Charge William Lometti, Investigators of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Police, BECI, under the direction of Lieutenant Richard Thomas, the New York State Department of Labor, Asbestos Control Bureau, under the direction of Maureen Cox, and Officers from the City of Rochester, Office of Public Integrity, under Director George Markert.

The fact that a defendant has been charged with a crime is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

Any person who was, at some time, present in or around 920 Exchange Street, Rochester, New York during the time period August 1, 2011 to December 14, 2011 may have been exposed to the asbestos therein. For more information, please call the NYS Health Department, refer to the website of the U.S. Attorney's Office, or call 1-800-799-6033.

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