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**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
District of Connecticut*

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**New Britain Man Admits Stealing and Selling Catalytic Converters**

Vanessa Roberts Avery, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that ROBERTO ALICEA, 31, of New Britain, pleaded guilty today before U.S. District Judge Sarala V. Nagala in Hartford to offenses related to his participation in a stolen catalytic converter trafficking ring.

According to court documents and statements made in court, law enforcement has been investigating the theft of catalytic converters from motor vehicles across Connecticut. A catalytic converter contains precious metals, can easily be removed from its vehicle, and is difficult to trace, making it a desirable target for thieves. The average scrap price for catalytic converters currently varies between \$300 and \$1,500, depending on the model and type of precious metal component.

The investigation revealed that Downpipe Depot & Recycling LLC (“Downpipe Depot”), which had a warehouse on Park Avenue in East Hartford, purchased stolen catalytic converters from a network of thieves, including Alicea, and then transported and sold the catalytic converters to recycling businesses in New York and New Jersey. Business records seized during the investigation revealed that, between December 2021 and May 2022, Downpipe Depot paid Alicea approximately \$540,000 for catalytic converters.

Alicea pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit interstate transportation of stolen property, an offense that carries a maximum term of imprisonment of five years, and one count of interstate transportation of stolen property, an offense that carries a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years. Judge Nagala scheduled sentencing for September 5.

Alicea has been detained since his arrest on August 23, 2022.

This investigation is being led by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation Division (IRS-CI), and the East Hartford Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S.

Attorneys Lauren C. Clark and A. Reed Durham.

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