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**OWNER/OPERATOR OF MONROE WASTEWATER TREATMENT
FACILITIES SENTENCED TO 21 MONTHS IN JAIL
FOR CLEAN WATER ACT VIOLATIONS**

Total fines assessed in the amount of \$850,000

Monroe, La.: U. S. Attorney Stephanie Finley announced today that the owner and operator of two Monroe, La. wastewater management companies, Louisiana Land & Water Company (LLWC) and LWC Management Company, Inc. (LWC), was sentenced for multiple violations of the Clean Water Act. These violations involved contamination of local drinking water supplies and failed to meet the required Clean Water Act standards.

Jeffrey Pruett, 58, of West Monroe, La., was sentenced today by Chief Judge Robert G. James to 21 months of imprisonment for each felony count that he was convicted of (six counts for failure to maintain and provide records and one count for effluent limitations violation), and 12 months imprisonment for one misdemeanor count for failure to provide proper operation and maintenance of the facility. The sentences are to run concurrent. Pruett was also sentenced to one year supervised release following his prison term. In addition to the prison term, the judge ordered that Pruett pay a \$310,000 fine; LLWC was ordered to pay a \$300,000 fine; and LWC was ordered to pay a \$240,000 fine, for a total of \$850,000. There was also a victim witness assessment fee of \$725.00 to be paid by Pruett, a \$2,800.00 victim witness assessment fee to be paid by LLWC, and a \$400.00 victim witness assessment fee to be paid by LWC.

Pruett, LLWC and LWC were convicted in January of 2011, by a federal jury after a two week trial for failure to provide and maintain records, illegal discharge of pollutants and improper operation and maintenance of a facility. Pruett, as chief executive officer of the companies, was responsible for overseeing the operations and finances of both companies. Testimony during the federal trial showed that beginning in April 1999, Pruett and his

companies provided sewer and wastewater treatment services to the Bayou Galion, Charmingdale Estates, Daywood and Donovan Woods, Love Estates, and Pine Bayou Subdivisions of Monroe, La. Homeowners in these subdivisions were required to pay a fee for sewage and wastewater treatment services based on rates set by the Louisiana Public Service Commission.

Facilities that discharge effluent from wastewater treatment plants are required to obtain state discharge permits. In this case, the facilities would have been required to obtain the discharge permits from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. These permits required LLWC and LWC to properly operate and maintain sewage systems and wastewater treatment and control facilities and provide adequate staff qualified to ensure that the companies complied with pollutant limits. The state received numerous customer complaints about sewage backups at residences and cloudy, tainted water coming out of the taps. The state also received complaints about sewage discharges into roadside ditches near residences and improper termination of residents' sewage and water services.

United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley stated: "Louisiana is known for its many waterways and rich environmental resources. It is critical that we protect them. The Western District is home to 42 of the 64 parishes in the state. All of the citizens of the district have a right to have clean water. Without compliance with the law, everyone loses. This defendant and his companies blatantly disregarded the law, putting the health of the community at risk. We hope that this case sends a message to owners and operators that there are serious consequences when you violate the Clean Water Act."

Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Cynthia Giles stated: "Mr. Pruett's disregard for the law endangered residents who were paying for the services he neglected to provide. Today's sentence proves that those who knowingly break environmental laws will be held accountable for their criminal actions that threaten people's health."

This case was investigated by the EPA and the State of Louisiana. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Earl M. Campbell.

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