



The City of New York
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DOI ARRESTS WESTCHESTER DINER OWNER FOR \$1,000 BRIBE TO UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATORS
-- DEP Watershed Inspector reported the bribe offer to DOI --

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced today the felony arrest of JAMES DIMOPOULOS, the owner of the Bedford Diner in Bedford Hills, Westchester County, for allegedly offering a \$1,000 bribe to a Watershed inspector for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Bureau of Water Supply in connection with an ongoing investigation by DEP relating to potential contamination of the New Croton Reservoir. In a separate incident, DIMOPOULOS gave \$1,000 in cash to two DOI undercover investigators posing as DEP supervisors before he was arrested.

DIMOPOULOS, 50, of Katonah, New York, was charged Wednesday night with two counts of Bribery in the Third Degree. If convicted, he faces up to seven years in prison on each count. DIMOPOULOS was arraigned and posted \$5,000 bail.

DOI's investigation began after the DEP Watershed Inspector reported the bribe offer to DOI as required under City law. At the time the bribe was offered, DEP was trying to determine if sewage was seeping into protected wetlands adjacent to the diner from the diner itself via either a defective septic system or an illegal hookup to a storm drain, which ultimately feeds into the New Croton Reservoir. DEP's investigation into the source of the potential contamination is ongoing. As part of its investigation, DEP performed a dye test at the Bedford Diner in order to determine whether the diner was a source of the potential pollution. Several days after the dye test was performed, the inspector returned to the diner in order to observe whether any of the dye introduced by DEP into the diner's septic system had appeared in the protected wet lands. While the DEP's investigation was underway, DIMOPOULOS offered the DEP inspector a \$1,000 bribe payment in exchange for over-looking any violations of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law or New York City's Watershed Regulations observed by the inspector. The inspector refused the bribe and reported the matter immediately to DOI. Later that day, two undercover DOI investigators returned to the diner posing as DEP supervisors and met with DIMOPOULOS. During this meeting at the restaurant in Bedford, DIMOPOULOS allegedly made a \$1,000 cash payment to the DOI investigators in exchange for an agreement that DEP inspectors would stay away from the diner.

DEP is the New York City agency charged with the critical responsibility of the delivery of drinking water from upstate. The Bureau of Water Supply is responsible for operating, maintaining and protecting New York City's upstate water supply system to ensure delivery of a sufficient quantity of high quality drinking water to the City and several upstate counties, including Westchester. The Bureau of Water Supply is also responsible for the implementation of the components of the City's Long-term Watershed Protection Program. Located in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties, the Croton system has 12 reservoirs and three controlled lakes. The largest, the New Croton Reservoir, can hold 19 billion gallons of water. The system normally supplies 10 percent of the City's drinking water, but can supply more when there is a drought in the watersheds farther upstate.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "While every City employee is obligated to report offers of bribes to DOI, I congratulate the DEP employee for doing so. The employee refused to compromise his honesty and integrity and helped DOI catch a corrupt business owner who put his own interests ahead of the nine million New Yorkers who depend upon the New York City water supply system each day."

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd, and members of her staff, including Acting Deputy Commissioner Paul Rush of the Bureau of Water Supply, for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Inspector General for DEP John B. Kantor, and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Michael Carroll and First Assistant Inspector General Michael Healy. The Office of Westchester County District Attorney Janet DiFiore is handling the case. Michael Hughes, Chief of Public Integrity Bureau, will prosecute the case with the assistance of Susan Brailey, Chief of the Environmental Crimes Bureau.

Criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

Get the worms out of the Big Apple.
To report someone ripping off the city, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.