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Last of 10 Las Vegas Defendants Pleads Guilty to Falsifying Emissions Test Records

DMV Database Project Led to Indictments

WASHINGTON – Wajdi Waked, 25, of Las Vegas, pleaded guilty today before Judge Philip M. Pro of the U.S. District Court in Nevada, to one count of violating the Clean Air Act by falsifying emissions test results.

A grand jury in Las Vegas indicted Waked in January of 2010. Waked was one of nine other defendants, all at different testing locations, accused of similarly submitting false tests to the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles (NDMV). The cases came to the attention of Nevada authorities in 2008 when the NDMV hired a contractor to build a vehicle identification database to find possible emissions testing fraud. NDMV discovered that in 2008 alone, there were over 4,000 false vehicle emissions certificates issued in Las Vegas. The database allows investigators to check the vehicle identification number that the emissions tester enters against the vehicle actually tested. Las Vegas and surrounding Clark County is required by the EPA to have emissions testing because the area is in non-attainment for carbon monoxide and ozone.

All of the other nine defendants pleaded guilty. Two in addition to Waked remain scheduled for sentencing. Judge Pro set Waked's sentencing for Aug. 1, 2011.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Nevada Division of Motor Vehicles. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Roger Yang of the District of Nevada and Senior Trial Attorney J. Ronald Sutcliffe of the Justice Department's Environmental Crimes Section of the Environment and Natural Resources Division.