



The United States Attorney's Office

Western District of Virginia

NEWS RELEASE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

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SALEM, KIK (VIRGINIA) LLC PLEADS GUILTY AND AGREES TO PAY FINE FOR NEGLIGENT DISCHARGES TO SEWER SYSTEM

United States Attorney Julia C. Dudley announced today that KIK (Virginia) LLC, of Salem, Virginia, pleaded guilty in the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia in Roanoke, to a misdemeanor violation of the Clean Water Act today. As part of the agreement, KIK has agreed to pay a \$75,000 criminal fine and \$25,000 in community service payments for negligent discharges of bleach to the sanitary sewer system in Salem, Virginia.

"The United States Attorney's Office takes environmental crimes very seriously and will continue to prosecute those who violate environmental law," United States Attorney Julia C. Dudley said today. "I am thankful to the members of the Blue Ridge Environmental Task Force for keeping our region clean and safe by investigating environmental crimes in our area."

KIK Virginia operated a facility in Salem that manufactured bleach and other household products. On September 4, 2003, local authorities discovered elevated concentrations of bleach in the sanitary sewer lines servicing the KIK Virginia facility. An investigation revealed that at that time and for a number of years before, under previous owners, employees at the plant washed bleach that had been spilled in the production and bottling process and off-specification bleach into the plant's floor drains. The floor drains channeled the bleach into the plant's drainage system, which lead to Salem's sanitary sewer system, operated by the Western Virginia Water Authority. The plant did not have a permit to discharge bleach to the sewer system and did not monitor its discharges.

The Clean Water Act prohibits discharges into a sewer system of any pollutants that the discharger knows could cause property damage. Bleach is a corrosive chemical that, in sufficient concentration, may damage metal and other materials used in the sewer system and is considered a pollutant under the Clean Water Act.

The \$25,000 in community service payments will be divided equally between the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the National Environmental Education Fund for use in

projects to improve water quality in the Salem area. In addition to the criminal fine and community service payment, KIK Virginia has agreed to serve one year of probation, during which it will continue to develop and implement an environmental management system that it began developing during the investigation. It also will complete an environmental audit conducted by an independent auditor.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Criminal Investigation Division (EPA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Salem Police Department, the City of Salem Fire and EMS Department, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Western Virginia Water Authority, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Salem Water and Sewer Department, all members of the Blue Ridge Environmental Task Force. The case was prosecuted by Lana Pettus, Trial Attorney for the Department of Justice, Environmental Crimes Section and Assistant United States Attorney Jennie L. M. Waering. This case demonstrates the effectiveness of the Blue Ridge Environmental Task Force which facilitates cooperative law enforcement efforts in the environmental arena.