



NEWS RELEASE

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CLINTON COUNTY VILLAGE WATER PLANT OPERATOR PLEADS GUILTY TO MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS

CINCINNATI -- Jeffrey Alan Nichols, age 38 of Martinsville, pled guilty in United States District Court here today to falsifying reports to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency about the amount of chlorine in the water supply for the Village of Martinsville.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio; Doug Parker, Acting Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division; Joe Koncelik, Director, Ohio EPA, Ohio Attorney General Jim Petro, announced the plea entered today before Chief United States District Judge Sandra S. Beckwith.

According to a statement of facts filed with his plea, Nichols did not analyze the drinking water from the village's water treatment plant for chlorine on more than 90 days that he was required to between October 2000 and September 2003. On those days, he made up analytical results for chlorine and reported those results to the Ohio EPA.

"Monitoring Ohioans' drinking water is an important responsibility," Lockhart said. "We will prosecute those who shirk this duty and fail to carry out their responsibility."

Nichols faces a sentence of up to five years imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000 and three years of supervised release. He could also be permanently banned from seeking any license or certificate relating to drinking water or wastewater, barred from working for or consulting in any matter relating to drinking water or wastewater. The plea agreement also calls for him to contribute \$400 to the Clinton Streamkeepers, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to preserve, improve and protect water quality in Clinton County. Judge Beckwith did not set a date for sentencing.

Lockhart commended the members of the Southern Ohio Environmental Crimes Task Force who investigated the case, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Laura Clemmens, who prosecuted the case.

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