



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### **DEQ Criminal Division makes arrest**

BATON ROUGE – Marios Papadopoulos, 44, of Ruston was arrested in Ouachita Parish and charged with 16 counts of exceeding water discharge permit limits, 22 counts of submitting false documents pertaining to the permits and four counts of negligent violation by exceeding permitted discharge limits. All charges are related to permit violations under the Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

Papadopoulos owns American Water and Wastewater Management and operates numerous wastewater treatment plants in northern Louisiana. DEQ alleges that he did not report discharges from one of his facilities for more than two years, from 2005-2007, and that discharges from two other facilities during that time exceeded his permitted limits.

If convicted, Papadopoulos faces a maximum of \$50,000 in fines and three years in prison per charge for knowingly violating state laws covering an illegal discharge. Filing false reports carries a maximum of \$10,000 in fines and two years in prison per charge. The case was referred to DEQ's Criminal Investigation Division after the department's inspectors discovered his business was conducting possible illegal activity.

“As a department, it is our mission to ensure that the public is safe from harmful, or potentially harmful, environmental activities,” said Peter Ricca, DEQ CID chief. “Criminal enforcement is one way to ensure people are abiding by the environmental regulations.”

*An arrest does not constitute guilt in a criminal case. All evidence compiled during the investigation is presented to area prosecutors to determine if formal charges are warranted.*

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