



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

HAROLD LEGGETT, Ph.D.
SECRETARY

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Contact: Tim Beckstrom
Telephone: 225.219.3967

DEQ Issues Civil Penalties of \$374,470 to Pruett Wastewater Companies

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) has issued \$374,470.00 in civil enforcement penalties against Louisiana Land and Water Company, Grace Utilities, Inc., and Utility Data Service Corporation. All three are wastewater companies privately owned and operated by Jeffrey Pruett from his office headquarters in West Monroe, Louisiana.

These fines were levied against Pruett as a part of a comprehensive civil enforcement action which has been coordinated with the federal/state environmental criminal investigation over the past few years. LDEQ is committed to protecting the public and our civil investigation is ongoing and is being conducted with our other federal and state partners. These fines issued today are for additional water discharge civil violations independent from those criminal charges he was recently indicted for in Federal Court. Previously, Pruett was arrested on June 4, 2009, on seventeen felony criminal charges involving violations of his water discharge permits. He was indicted last week and pled not guilty to those charges.

In this civil action, Pruett is alleged to have violated his Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits by failing to sample and report properly, violating effluent discharge limits set forth in the permits, discharging without a permit, recordkeeping violations and failing to provide proper operation and maintenance, in addition to unauthorized discharges from locations not authorized by the permits. Violations cover the period from 1995 to 2007. Civil penalties issued to Pruett total \$374,470.10.

"We will be making every effort, in conjunction with our partners, to ensure not only public safety, but to restore the public confidence of citizens who have borne the ill effects of these practices," stated Peggy Hatch, LDEQ Assistant Secretary.

Pruett, 57, is president and CEO of Louisiana Land and Water Company and the Principal Officer of LWC Management Company. He operates more than 30 public water supply system units and wastewater treatment units in north Louisiana, including Grace Utilities, Inc. and Utility Data Service Corporation.