



Orange County News

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District Attorney Hoovler announces Guilty Pleas in Tax and Illegal Dumping Case Prosecuted Under the Crimes Against Revenue Program

Orange County District Attorney Fourth Highest Collector of Fraudulently Obtained Government Funds in New York State in 2016 Under C.A.R.P. Program

Orange County District Attorney's Office Collected over \$1.4 Million Dollars in Illegally Obtained Government Money in 2016

Slate Hill Business Owner Admits to Stealing Sales Tax and Illegal Dumping

Orange County District Attorney David M. Hoovler announced today, that on Monday, June 5, 2017, Raymond Otte, 55, of Slate Hill, pleaded guilty to Criminal Tax Fraud in the Third Degree, a Class D felony, and Endangering Public Health Safety or the Environment in the Fourth Degree, a crime, in connection with his businesses A Thru Z Trucking, Inc. and A Thru Z Farms, Inc., which operate on Route 6 in the Town of Wawayanda. Otte admitted to Orange County Court Judge Robert H. Freehill that between January 2012 and July 14, 2015, he had collected \$67,846 in New York State sales tax which he never sent to the Tax Department. Otte also admitted underreporting his income on his New York State personal income tax returns and allowing several other companies to illegally dump construction and demolition debris on his Town of Wawayanda property. Under the terms of a plea agreement placed on the record at the time Otte pled guilty, he will be required to pay back all of the stolen sales tax, clean up his property under the supervision of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and pay \$15,000 in additional civil forfeiture.

The prosecution was undertaken as part of New York State's Crimes Against Revenue Program known as "C.A.R.P.", which is designed to recover government funds which have been criminally or fraudulently obtained. In 2014, the Orange County District Attorney's Office applied for the first time to be included in the C.A.R.P. program. The program funds the salary of one Assistant District Attorney, who specializes in crimes against revenue. Prosecutions under the C.A.R.P. program include not only tax crimes, but many types of welfare frauds, labor

law crimes, and other frauds which cost taxpayers money. In 2016, the Orange County District Attorney's Office was fourth in New York State in overall C.A.R.P. collections.

The case against Otte began with an investigation by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Police, who alerted the District Attorney's Office to the illegal dumping. The District Attorney's Office, working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Police, New York State Police and the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, obtained search warrants which were executed at Otte's businesses and at other location in Orange and Rockland counties.

The case against Raymond Otte is being prosecuted by Executive Assistant District Attorney Andrew Kass and Assistant District Attorney Lara Morrison.

District Attorney Hoovler thanked the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Police, the New York State Police, and the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance for their investigation and the arrest of Raymond Otte.

"Protecting our environment and protecting taxpayers' wallets has been a top priority for my office," said District Attorney Hoovler. "I am grateful for the excellent working relationship that we have with law enforcement agencies here in Orange County, including with the New York State Police, the Department of Environmental Conservation Police, and the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. The C.A.R.P. program allows us to bring additional resources to fight thefts of taxpayers' money. Whether it is prosecuting Labor Law violations, Welfare Fraud, or Tax Fraud, my office will continue use every tool at our disposal to ensure that government money which is designed to go to the truly needy, remains available and is not dissipated by those engaging in fraud."

A criminal charge is merely an allegation that a defendant has committed a violation of the criminal law, and it is not evidence of guilt. All defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the State of New York's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

