

Criminal Enforcement/Lead Service Line Replacement: U.S. Department of Justice Charges Two New Jersey Individuals with Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud



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The United States Department of Justice (“DOJ”) filed a criminal complaint against Michael Sawyer and Latronia Sanders of New Jersey for their alleged roles in a conspiracy to commit wire fraud.

The alleged wire fraud is stated to have been in connection with the Newark Lead Service Line Service Replacement Program (“LSLR”).

Newark, New Jersey FBI Acting Special Agent In Charge Nelson I. Delgado is quoted in the DOJ news release as stating that:

...For years, lead pipes that transport drinking water to homes in Newark remained buried in the ground after the city hired a company to replace them,” Newark FBI Acting Special Agent in Charge Nelson I. Delgado said. “The business, along with others, were paid to replace the water service lines because any amount of lead exposure is detrimental to people’s health, particularly for children. We allege the subjects in this investigation knew they were not replacing the lead pipes, and then passed off misleading photos to conceal the ones they left in the ground.

JAS Group enterprise Inc. (“JAS”) is described as one of the contractors hired by Newark to replace approximately 18,000 lead service lines within the city limits as part of its LSLR program. Sawyer is described as the President and Chief Executive Officer of JAS, responsible for overseeing and managing its operations. Sanders is described as being employed by JAS as a foreman of its crews assigned to replace lead pipes in Newark during the LSLR program.

The criminal complaint was filed in the United States District Court of New Jersey. See Mag. No. 24-10187.

A copy of the DOJ news release can be found [here](#).

A copy of the criminal complaint can be found [here](#).