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Orleans Parish man pleads guilty to illegal disposal of waste tires

BATON ROUGE – Orleans Parish resident Bryant Joseph Ballard pleaded guilty Friday, Jan. 18, in Orleans Parish Criminal District Court for illegal disposal of waste tires and unauthorized use of a movable.

In Feb. 2018, Ballard, 57, was arrested by New Orleans Police Department officers for theft of a U-Haul truck and an outstanding Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality warrant for illegal disposal of waste tires in New Orleans East. As the result of an extensive investigation, agents concluded that Ballard was using rented U-Haul trucks to collect and illegally dispose of waste tires in New Orleans East. After conducting numerous hours of covert surveillance, investigators with the LDEQ Criminal Investigation Section obtained an arrest warrant for Ballard on Dec. 1, 2017.

The LDEQ warrant outlined four counts of illegal disposal of waste tires in New Orleans and New Orleans East. The investigation was handled by a task force comprising agents from LDEQ, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Louisiana State Police, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement and NOPD.

On Friday, Jan. 18, 2019, Ballard pleaded guilty to all charges. The Honorable Judge Keva Landrum-Johnson sentenced Ballard to the statutory maximum of two years in prison for unauthorized use of a movable and to the statutory maximum of one year for illegal disposal of waste tires. Judge Landrum-Johnson ordered Ballard to serve the two sentences consecutively for a total of three years.

“Cases like this send the message that this department will not go easy on waste tire disposal violators,” LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown said. “Our CIS personnel put in many hours of time and effort to stop these perpetrators and send our message to others: If you break the law, we’re coming after you.”

“I applaud everyone that helped make this case. The horrible practice of dumping tires is devastating to our fishing, hunting and recreational areas that our residents and visitors want to enjoy,” Jack Montoucet, secretary of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, said.

“In 2018, the Department of Sanitation removed 47,964 waste tires from the public right of way. We applaud the exceptional work of the task force and hope this sentence serves as a powerful deterrent against future illegal dumping,” Matt Torri, Deputy Director of Department of Sanitation for the city of New Orleans, said.

“As I have said, ‘we can’t do it without you,’” NOPD Superintendent Shaun Ferguson said. “The successful investigation into these illegal dumping incidents that led to the arrests and conviction of these two individuals is an excellent example of how close cooperation between the NOPD, state agencies, residents and community organizations can lead to real crime-fighting results. We strongly encourage citizens and community groups not to hesitate alerting us to illegal activities.”

“Illegal dumping is a serious problem in some areas of the city. No neighborhood should have its property values and quality of life diminished by the blight, health hazards and other problems associated with illegal dumping activities,” Orleans Parish District Attorney Leon Cannizzaro said. “I’m grateful for the hard work of this multi-agency effort, headed by the investigators of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and including federal and state fisheries and wildlife agencies. Their diligence helped us put together a solid case against this defendant. I hope this meaningful sentence imposed by the judge will dissuade others from such activity.”

The prosecution was handled by the Orleans Parish District Attorney’s Office, District Attorney Leon A. Cannizzaro and Assistant District Attorney Darius Greene.

The mission of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is to protect the environment and public health. Any persons with knowledge of any illegal dumping activity, spills, releases, odors, fish kills, open burning, waste tires and any other types of environmental incidents may contact the department at 225-219-3640 or toll-free 1-888-763-5424.

Citizens may also report an incident online by filling out an incident report form at: <http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/file-a-complaint-report-an-incident>.