



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Information Contact Public Affairs

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### **CALIFORNIA BASED ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT SENTENCED ON PERJURY AND OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE CONVICTIONS**

R. Alexander Acosta, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Ricky Langlois, Special Agent in Charge, Environmental Protection Agency, and Robert E. Harris, Special Agent in Charge, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, announced today that defendant, **Burtram Johnson**, 74, an environmental/land consultant from California, was sentenced in Key West, on June 12, 2006, by United States District Judge K. Michael Moore, to two (2) years imprisonment, a \$50,000 fine, 2 years of supervised release and a special assessment of \$500. Johnson was previously convicted by a Key West federal jury on March 2, 2006, of two (2) counts of obstruction of justice, two (2) counts of perjury, and one (1) count of making material false statements to federal agents.

According to the Indictment and the evidence presented at trial, a federal grand jury in Key West, Florida was investigating allegations that Jeffrey A. Balch, of Marathon, had conducted illegal fill activities in Florida Bay, a waterway of the United States. Johnson knowingly gave false testimony before that grand jury on November 12, 2003 and on June 16, 2004, with the

intent to influence, obstruct and impede the due administration of justice.

According to the evidence presented at trial, on both these occasions, Johnson lied to the grand jury regarding when he first learned of Balch's illegal fill activities. Johnson stated to the federal investigators and to the grand jury that he was unaware of any illegal fill activities taking place on Balch's bay front property in Marathon, Florida, prior to being contacted by a United States Army Corp of Engineers ("USACE") representative. In truth, however, Johnson was aware of the filling activities taking place on Balch's property in Marathon prior to any contact by a USACE representative.

Mr. Acosta commended the investigative efforts of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney José A. Bonau.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida at [www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls). Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at [www.flsd.uscourts.gov](http://www.flsd.uscourts.gov) or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.

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