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District of Connecticut

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 16, 2020

Contractor Charged with Lying to OSHA Investigators

John H. Durham, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, and Michael C. Mikulka, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, today announced that a federal grand jury in New Haven has returned an indictment charging LUIS F. ESTRADA, 46, of Bridgeport, with making false statements and submitting false documents to the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("OSHA").

The indictment was returned on January 2, 2020. Estrada appeared yesterday before U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert M. Spector in New Haven, entered a plea of not guilty to the charges, and was released on a \$75,000 bond.

As alleged in the indictment, Estrada is the owner of a construction company named L.L.E. Construction, LLC. In February 2018, Estrada and L.L.E. Construction entered into a written contract to perform roof repairs and other construction services at a property located on Main Street in Bridgeport. In February and March 2018, Estrada was provided with three checks totaling \$11,000 for performing the work. On March 1, 2018, a compliance officer with OSHA visited the property and observed what he believed to be various safety infractions by construction workers who were making the roof repairs. The officer then initiated an on-site inspection into the suspected infractions. Estrada was not present at the Main Street property at the time, but spoke to the compliance officer by mobile phone.

It is further alleged that, on May 22, 2018, OSHA compliance officers served Estrada with a subpoena that demanded documents and records related to L.L.E. Construction's work at the Main Street property in February and March 2018. On July 30, 2018, Estrada hand-delivered a written response stating that he "did not do any work for the 'LLE Roofing Project,'" that "[t]here is no payroll because [he] did not work on the 'LLE Roofing Project,'" and that he "do[es] not have any contract or any documents regarding the 'LLE Roofing Project.'"

The indictment charges Estrada with one count of making false statements to the U.S. Department of Labor, which carries a maximum term of imprisonment of five years, and one count of falsification of records in a federal investigation, which carries a maximum term of imprisonment of 20 years.

U.S. Attorney Durham stressed that an indictment is not evidence of guilt. Charges are only allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

This matter is being investigated by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Margaret M. Donovan.

Topic(s):

Labor & Employment

Component(s):

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