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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**LAWRENCE AVIATION INDUSTRIES, INC. AND ITS OWNER/OPERATOR PLEAD  
GUILTY TO ILLEGALLY STORING HAZARDOUS WASTE ON LONG ISLAND**

***United States Attorney Announces Formation of District-Wide Environmental Crimes Task  
Force***

LAWRENCE AVIATION INDUSTRIES, INC. (LAI), and its owner and operator, GERALD COHEN, today pleaded guilty for their roles in storing more than 12 tons of hazardous waste in violation of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) at LAI's principal place of business in Port Jefferson Station, NY. Under the terms of their plea agreements, COHEN faces five years' imprisonment, and both defendants face maximum fines of \$50,000 for each day of the violation, which could total in excess of \$35 million. The guilty plea proceedings were held before United States District Judge Denis R. Hurley, at the United States Courthouse, in Central Islip, NY.

LAI began operating at the Port Jefferson Station site in 1959 and manufactured titanium sheets used primarily in the aeronautics industry. COHEN became the sole owner and operator of LAI in 1982. Part of the manufacturing process required the use of large tanks containing corrosive acid and base liquids. At some point in time, LAI stopped using two of the tanks in the manufacturing operations, and instead used them to store liquids and sludge. In April 2003, personnel from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Criminal Investigation Division and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) tested the contents of the two tanks and determined that they contained corrosive hazardous waste. The defendants violated RCRA by not disposing of the tanks' contents in a timely manner and by storing the contents without a permit from EPA or DEC. During today's guilty pleas, COHEN and LAI admitted to illegally storing 11,690 kilograms -- over 12 tons -- of corrosive hazardous waste material.

A separate civil lawsuit brought by the United States is pending against LAI, COHEN, and six parcels of land under the federal Superfund statute to recover over \$8 million in clean-up costs previously incurred by EPA at LAI's manufacturing facility, as well as a judgment of liability for future clean-up costs to be incurred at the LAI site.

"We are committed to protecting the public and our environment," said United States Attorney Benton J. Campbell. "Those who pollute our environment will be held accountable through criminal prosecution and civil cost-recovery lawsuits."

"The improper management of hazardous waste can pose a serious threat to the surrounding community, and violations of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act must be taken seriously," said EPA Regional Administrator Alan J. Steinberg.

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Mark J. Mershon stated, "The defendants admitted to illegal conduct that posed a threat not only to the environment but to people. Enforcement of our environmental laws is important not only to protect natural resources but to protect human life."

"This plea agreement is an important step forward in ongoing efforts by state and federal environmental agencies to hold polluters accountable for their actions," said DEC Regional Director Peter A. Scully. "DEC has been actively involved in the investigation and monitoring of the site and looks forward to working with EPA to ensure that remediation of environmental impacts resulting from LAI's significant violations are completed and protective of the public."

In a separate development, United States Attorney Campbell announced the formation of a district-wide task force comprised of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to bring renewed focus to the prosecution of environmental crimes. In addition to the Eastern District United States Attorney's Office, participating agencies include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,

Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, New York City Department of Investigation, New York State Office of the Inspector General, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Office of the Inspector General, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, and the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office.

The government's criminal case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Mark J. Lesko. The environmental crimes task force will be coordinated by Assistant United States Attorneys Taryn Merkl and Roger Burlingame.

**The Defendants:**

LAWRENCE AVIATION INDUSTRIES, INC.  
Sheep Pasture Road, Port Jefferson, NY

GERALD COHEN  
Age: 74