

**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Western District of Washington**



October 28, 2009

**TACOMA RESIDENT SENTENCED FOR ILLEGALLY
DUMPING OILY WASTE INTO CITY WASTEWATER
SYSTEM
Defendant Used Self-Serve Car Wash to Dump
Cooking Grease**

GUADALUPE SANCHEZ ROMAN, 36, of Tacoma, Washington, pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in Tacoma to violating the Clean Water Act. SANCHEZ ROMAN admitted that he dumped an acidic waste water containing grease and vegetable oil into the municipal sewers in Tacoma through floor drains at a self-service car wash. SANCHEZ ROMAN was arrested and detained on August 27, 2009, and was sentenced today to time served (64 days). SANCHEZ ROMAN is a Mexican national who was in the country illegally, and now will be subject to removal proceedings. U.S. District Court Judge Benjamin H. Settle imposed the sentence.

According to records filed in the case, the owners of Center Street Car Wash in Tacoma contacted the Tacoma Public Works Department reporting that surveillance photos taken at the car wash showed the same man dumping what appeared to be waste water into their drain system on approximately seventy (70) different occasions between April 2009 and August 2009. The car wash has numerous signs stating that it is illegal to dump such waste. Agents from the Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division reviewed the surveillance video. The surveillance shows a pick-up truck with a drum of waste arrive at the car wash bay. The driver activates the power washer, and while rinsing the truck and truck bed, pulls a plug at the bottom of the drum of waste water. The man continues to power wash the waste out of the truck bed and onto the floor of the car wash bay. The water flows into a floor drain that leads to the Tacoma municipal sewer system.

On August 26, 2009, agents were observing as SANCHEZ ROMAN picked up a drum of waste from La Sinaloense mobile restaurant down the block from the car wash. SANCHEZ ROMAN pulled into the car wash bay and began washing the truck. The agents confronted SANCHEZ ROMAN after he pulled the plug on the drum of cooking oil and grease waste. SANCHEZ ROMAN admitted to agents he knew it was illegal to dump the oily waste into the sewer system.

"This investigation is a great example of local business working with Federal and Local governments to catch and prosecute an illegal dumping operation," said Mike Kennedy with Tacoma Public Works. "Oil and grease dumped in this manner can cause obstructions in the collection system and sanitary sewer overflows to local waterways. This should be a lesson to others who have illegally dumped or thought of dumping untreated wastewaters."

"This is an example of EPA Criminal Investigation Division work to

protect the waters of Puget Sound. Protecting Puget Sound is a top priority for the Environmental Protection Agency," said Mark Measer, Special Agent in Charge of EPA-CID in Seattle.

The case was investigated by the Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division (EPA-CID) with the assistance of the Tacoma Public Works Department.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jim Oesterle. Mr. Oesterle heads up the U.S. Attorney's Office working group on environmental crime.

For additional information please contact Emily Langlie, Public Affairs Officer for the United States Attorney's Office, at (206) 553-4110 or Emily.Langlie@USDOJ.Gov.

