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LAWRENCE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO VIOLATING CLEAN WATER ACT

TOPEKA, KAN. – **Raymond Sawyer**, 57, Lawrence, Kan., and his company, **MagnaGro International, Inc.**, have pleaded guilty to unlawfully discharging waste from a fertilizer manufacturing operation into the city of Lawrence's sewer system.

Sawyer and the company were charged with criminal violations of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, which also is known as the Clean Water Act.

In their pleas, Sawyer and the company admitted that Magna Gro International, Inc., at 600 E. 22nd Street in Lawrence, Kan., formulates chemical fertilizers for re-sale nationwide. In March 2001, Sawyer and the company discharged a large quantity of industrial waste from fertilizer production into the city of Lawrence's sewer system, interfering with the operation of the sewer system. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the city of Lawrence ordered Sawyer to discharge no more material into the sewer system.

In September 2007, agents of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Criminal Investigation Division found Sawyer and MagnaGro discharging waste from the fertilizer operation into the city's sewer system via a hose inserted into a toilet stool. For 10 years, investigators determined, Sawyer and the company had been discharging waste through the hose. The hose was used to pump material into the toilet from a waste pit surrounding a mixing vat.

Sentencing is set for June 1, 2009. Sawyer faces a maximum penalty of 1 year in federal prison a fine up to \$25,000 per day of the violation. The company faces a possible fine of \$50,000 or more per day of violation.

Parker commended the Environmental Protection Agency - Criminal Investigation Division, Assistant U.S. Attorney Christine Kenney and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Ray Bosch for their work on the case.

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