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ASSETS RECOVERY
AGENCY

Press Release

22 August 2007

BRADFORD MAN CONVICTED OF WASTE DUMPING HAS ASSETS FROZEN BY ARA

The Assets Recovery Agency (ARA), working in partnership with the Environment Agency, has successfully obtained restraint orders to freeze properties belonging to a Bradford man convicted of illegally dumping asbestos and excavation waste.

ARA's investigation follows the conviction of William John Peter Reidy, aged 60, of Bradford. The prosecution against Mr Reidy was brought by the Environment Agency following the illegal activities of a demolition business run by him, called Space Making Development. In spite of not holding a waste management licence, the firm was being paid to take building waste away from companies across Yorkshire.

Officers from the Environment Agency carried out surveillance on the site and estimated that a total of 200 lorry loads of waste had been illegally dumped. A skip containing asbestos sheeting was also discovered, for which the business did not hold a licence.

Mr Reidy was sentenced to 16 months' imprisonment of each of four charges relating to the keeping and depositing of waste, including asbestos. The sentences were ordered to run concurrently, as were further sentences of three months for each of nine further waste charges.

ARA is investigating whether or not and if so, to what extent, the defendants have benefited from their illegal activities and will seek to recover assets equal to a value of the benefit established.

Commenting on this stage of the criminal confiscation process, ARA Deputy Director, Charlie Dickin, said: **"We are determined to recover the proceeds from all types of illegal activity, including illegal dumping and fly-tipping which, as well as damaging the environment, poses a risk to human health.**

"This restraint order will prevent the disposal of the assets belonging to Mr Reidy while we continue with our investigation to establish the full scale of the benefit obtained from this criminal conduct, thus assisting the court to make any appropriate confiscation orders. The restraint and any confiscation of

assets sends a clear message to others involved in illegal activities that we are dedicated to recover the proceeds of illegal activities and that crime does not pay.”

Paul Salter, Environmental Crime Officer at the Environment Agency, explained: **“This is the first time that assets have been seized in a case like this and shows that businesses cannot get away with putting profits before the environment and human health – as this case shows. If you are an offender, we will track you down and take you to court. We can then refer the case to the Assets Recovery Agency which will endeavour to confiscate any monies and assets made from these ill-gotten gains. Demolition contractors must take their responsibilities seriously as people will not put up with them blighting our towns and countryside.”**

Notes for Editors:

1. The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 created the Assets Recovery Agency and in addition to confiscation proceedings pursuant to a criminal conviction provided completely new powers to allow ARA to seek civil recovery of the proceeds of unlawful activity by an action in the High Court. The Agency can also issue tax assessments where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that there is taxable income, gain or profit from criminal conduct.

2. In addition to these unique powers, the Agency is committed to building capacity for effective financial investigation throughout the law enforcement community and it offers its expertise to other agencies to assist them in confiscating criminal assets.

3. The Agency is playing its part in the multi-agency approach to deliver the Government's Asset Recovery Strategy. Under the cross government initiative 'Payback', the tracing of and recovery of assets is seen as an important element in the delivery of justice, and sends out a strong deterrent message. The overall aims of the strategy are to make greater use of the investigations of criminal assets in the fight against crime; recover money that has been made from crime or which is intended for use in crime; prevent criminals and their associates from laundering the proceeds of criminal conduct, and detect and penalise such laundering where it occurs; to use the proceeds recovered for the benefit of the community.

4. On 11th January 2007, the Home Office laid a Written Ministerial Statement before Parliament setting out Government proposals to merge the Assets Recovery Agency (ARA) with the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), and to extend to prosecutors the power to launch civil recovery action under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. The Written Ministerial Statement can be viewed at <http://www.assetsrecovery.gov.uk/AboutARA/>. Any proposed merger will require primary legislation. In the meantime ARA will continue to operate as before and use its powers to the full in proceeding with all cases under active litigation as well as adopting new cases from referring agencies in the criminal enforcement community.

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