Environmental Criminal Enforcement: Michigan Attorney General Announces Arrest of an Individual for Alleged Activities Associated with 2022 Flint River Oil Discharge

Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

01/08/2025

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel issued a news release announcing the arrest and arraignment of Rajinder Singh Minhas alleging:

…multiple felony and misdemeanor charges for allegedly mismanaging and neglecting critical maintenance and upgrades at the Lockhart Chemical Company ("Lockhart"), resulting in the unauthorized oil discharge into the Flint River in 2022.

Minhas is described as having served as president, treasurer, and director of Lockhart.

Lockhart is described as a Flint, Michigan based chemical processing facility that manufactures rust-preventative additives for the metal working industry. Approximately 15,000 gallons of oil-chemical mixtures is stated to have been released from Lockhart's facility on June 15, 2022, into the Flint River.

The news release states that an investigation and chemical fingerprinting analysis confirmed that the oil-chemical mixture in the Flint River matched the material leaving Lockhart's facility.

Lockhart has been cited in publications as maintaining its innocence and that Lockhart was not responsible for the spill.

Minhas was arraigned in Genesee County District Court.

Counts alleged include:

- Falsely Altering a Public Record, a 14-year felony;
- Uttering and Publishing a False or Altered Public Record, a 14-year felony;
- Substantial Endangerment to Public, a 5-year felony;
- Discharge of Injurious Substance to Waters of the State, a 2-year felony;
- False Statements and Omissions regarding Air Pollution Control, a 1-year misdemeanor; and
- General Violations of Air Pollution Control law, punishable by a fine of up to $10,000 for each day violations occur.

A copy of the news release can be downloaded here.