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**Former National Grid Employee Who Helped Facilitate Operation of
Shadow Utility Company that Illegally Installed Gas Meters
Sentenced to Up to Three Years in State Prison**

Pleaded Guilty to Enterprise Corruption

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, together with New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Mark G. Peters, today announced that a former National Grid employee, who aided the leader of a shadow utility company that illegally installed gas meters in violation of safety protocols by infiltrating the public utility and corrupting some of its employees, has been sentenced to up to three years in prison.

District Attorney Gonzalez said, “This defendant used her position of trust to enable this criminal enterprise to operate. She circumvented protocols specifically put in place to protect public safety and facilitated this criminal scheme. She has now been held accountable.”

Commissioner Peters said, “This defendant acted as the dispatcher for a shadow utility operation, directing a network of unlicensed plumbers and other associates to addresses where they would install illegal gas meters for thousands of dollars in payments, ignoring safety and potentially endangering New Yorkers. Today’s sentencing holds her accountable for the integral part she played in this crime and demonstrates the importance of DOI’s investigations where City processes and regulations are violated in the construction industry. DOI thanks the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Office for their assistance and prosecution of this case.”

The District Attorney identified the defendant as Phoebe Bogan, 43, of Rosedale, Queens. She pleaded guilty to enterprise corruption on May 9, 2018, before Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Danny Chun, who, in a plea offered by the Court, promised her an indeterminate term of one to three years in state prison, to which he today sentenced the defendant.

Bogan worked as a National Grid customer service representative in the Special Services Group, in the utility’s main office at One Metro Tech Center, during the course of the scheme.

The mastermind of the scheme, Weldon “Al” Findlay, 48, of Snyder Avenue, Brooklyn, Findlay, who worked for National Grid until 2010, pleaded guilty earlier this year to one count of enterprise corruption and one count of falsifying business records before Justice Chun, who sentenced him to a promised term of 2 1/3 to 7 years in state prison.

The District Attorney said that, according to the guilty pleas, the enterprise arranged for the illegal installation of gas meters in exchange for cash at 33 residential properties across Brooklyn, including Williamsburg, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn Heights, Bushwick, Crown Heights, Midwood, and Borough Park, in addition to homes in parts of Queens. Findlay formed the enterprise and directed its criminal activities throughout the period covered by the indictment, namely January 12, 2016 to June 30, 2016.

The Department of Buildings and National Grid have inspected every property identified in connection with the investigation, and ensured that there is no risk to public safety.

The District Attorney said that existing protocols required National Grid employees opening accounts (for new or renewed gas service) to check the public Building Information System (BIS) database to confirm that the property had been inspected as required by the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB). A licensed master plumber or a DOB inspector must

visit the location and conduct appropriate testing to ensure that gas lines have been properly and safely installed; compliance is indicated by a control number created in the BIS database. A National Grid employee acting properly would check for the BIS number and then include it in the account record before dispatching a technician to install a meter and initiate gas service.

According to the investigation, when a landlord with a new or renovated apartment wanted to avoid either the expense of the required tests, or possible delays associated with compliance, the landlord paid Findlay, who then contacted Bogan, who would arrange for illegal service. Landlords could be confident that National Grid employees setting up the account and providing gas service would violate or ignore any rules or regulations that would prevent or delay the supply of gas.

The case was investigated by DOI, specifically, Deputy Inspector General Michael Antolini, Assistant Inspector General Noah Mohny; Assistant Inspector General Dan Taylor, Deputy Inspector General Edward Zinser and Chief Investigator James McElligott, under the supervision of Inspector General Gregory Cho, Associate Commissioner James J. Flaherty, and First Deputy Commissioner Lesley Brovner.

The District Attorney thanked New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Mark G. Peters and his staff for their hard work on this case. He also thanked the New York City Department of Buildings and National Grid for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant District Attorney Sara Walshe and Special Assistant District Attorney Renee Hassel, of the District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Michel Spanakos, Unit Chief, and the overall supervision of Assistant District Attorney Patricia McNeill, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney's Investigations Division and Mark Feldman, Senior Executive Assistant District Attorney for Crime Strategies and Investigations.

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