

# NEWS

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United States Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey  
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor  
Newark, New Jersey 07102

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***Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney***

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***More Information?*** Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 13, 2007

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Former Executive Director of Utilities Authority Sentenced  
To 51 Months in Prison on Corruption Charges

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(More)

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NEWARK – The former executive director of the Western Monmouth Utilities Authority, Frank G. Abate, was sentenced to 51 months in federal prison today for taking thousands of dollars worth of free architectural drawings for his home from developers in exchange for exercising his authority in favor of those developers, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Susan D. Wigenton also ordered Abate, 60, of Marlboro, to pay a \$10,000 fine. In sentencing the defendant, Judge Wigenton acknowledged Abate's failure in accepting responsibility for his conduct. Judge Wigenton continued Abate's bail pending his surrender to the U.S. Bureau of Prison, on a date to be determined.

On May 25, 2007, following a two-week trial, the jury convicted Abate on five counts of defrauding the public of his honest services and one count of obstructing a grand jury investigation. The jury deliberated about 10 hours over two days.

In finding Abate guilty, the jury found that Abate corruptly traded on his position as the WMUA's Executive Director when developers with matters pending before the WMUA paid \$4,800 for architectural plans for improvements to Abate's home. The jury also concluded that Abate tried to conceal his corrupt acts and impede a federal investigation.

"Abate operated with arrogance and a sense of entitlement," said Christie. "He used his position with the utilities authority to gain improvements to his home, today he joins the rogues gallery of New Jersey public officials who put personal interest ahead of the public trust. That choice will put any New Jersey state, county or municipal official on a road that ends in federal prison."

Abate was arrested on Nov. 21, 2006 by Special Agents of the FBI on the Indictment.

A prior release concerning Abate's conviction can be found by following the appropriate links on the office website at: [www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/)

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Richard E. Constable, III and Rachael A. Honig of the U.S. Attorney's Office Special Prosecutions Division.

Under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, Abate had faced a sentencing range of between 41 and 51 months in federal prison. Judge Wigenton, while required to consult the guidelines, has wide discretion and can impose a sentence within the range or above or below the range. The Sentencing Guidelines take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI Red Bank Resident Agency, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, and Special Agents of the Internal

Revenue Service, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William P. Offord, with the investigation leading to today's conviction.

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Defense Counsel: Joseph Benedict, Esq., New Brunswick