



*United States Attorney
District of New Jersey*

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**ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY CONSTRUCTION
CODE OFFICIAL ADMITS TAKING BRIBES**

TRENTON, N.J. – The Construction Code Official for the City of Englewood, N.J., pleaded guilty today to attempted extortion under the color of official right, admitting that he received bribes in exchange for his official assistance, United States Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Piero “Peter” Abballe, 46, of Old Tappan, N.J., pleaded guilty an Information before United States District Judge Joel A. Pisano in Trenton federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

From July 2009 to April 2010, Abballe received cash payments of \$1,000, \$1,500, and \$500 on three separate occasions from a cooperating witness who was acting at the direction of the FBI. Abballe accepted the bribes to exercise official action to assist the cooperating witness with construction code matters and inspections as specific opportunities arose, such as performing and expediting inspections and issuing and expediting Certificates of Occupancy on residences and commercial buildings in Englewood.

Abballe also served as the Construction Code Official for the Borough of Old Tappan.

The charge to which Abballe pleaded guilty carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Sentencing is scheduled for March 23, 2011.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward, for the investigation leading to today’s guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bradley A. Harsch of the U.S. Attorney’s Office Special Prosecutions Division in Newark.

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Defense counsel: Gerald Krovatin, Esq., Newark