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Store Owner in Mobile Pleads Guilty to Tax Crimes

MOBILE, Jan. 26, 2018 – Convenience store owner Anil Patel, 51, pleaded guilty on Dec. 11 to five felony counts of failure to collect, account for and pay over sales tax to the State of Alabama, as well as four counts of willful failure to file income tax returns. Patel was indicted by a Mobile County grand jury in March 2017 for multiple felonies arising out of his operation of convenience stores.

Patel has owned and operated several convenience stores throughout the Mobile area since incorporating in Alabama in 2003. As store owner, he failed to properly report and pay over to the state sales taxes collected from customers. He also willfully failed to file returns in multiple years for the corporation under which he operated the convenience stores and his individual returns for the same years.

Under the terms of a plea agreement, the court ordered Patel to pay the State of Alabama \$425,606.86 in restitution for the sales tax evaded, fraud penalties and interest. Patel faces five to 27 years imprisonment and restitution proceedings for multiple other years currently outstanding in which returns weren't filed as required by law for both corporate and individual income tax.

“We are using new data analytics, investigative methods, and city and county collaboration to focus on taxpayers and industries engaged in consistent criminal noncompliance with Alabama’s tax laws,” said Revenue Commissioner Vernon Barnett. “Convenience stores are one area where we’re focusing our attention because, quite simply, there is a high degree of tax evasion occurring within this business community. Although this case demonstrates progress, we understand it is only one step toward reassuring law abiding taxpayers that they are not at a disadvantage to their non-compliant competitors who flout the tax laws.”

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