



NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott

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STATE CONTRACT BRIDGE INSPECTOR CONVICTED AT TRIAL FOR FABRICATING SAFETY REVIEW

ALBANY - New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott and Hamilton County District Attorney Marsha King Purdue today announced the felony trial conviction of a State contract bridge inspector who falsified a safety inspection of a Hamilton County vehicular bridge over a creek in 2013, listing deficiencies that had actually been repaired a few months earlier.

Akram Ahmad, 58, of Bridgeport, CT., was convicted after two-and-a-half days of testimony by a Hamilton County Court jury on the felony charge of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. The jury found Ahmad falsified the report he filed from a December 2013 inspection he purportedly performed on a bridge over the Elbow Creek in the Town of Wells, Hamilton County.

“This defendant’s job was to help ensure the integrity of the State’s critical infrastructure, but he instead fabricated facts and falsified official records with little regard for public safety,” said **Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “I will pursue anyone who criminally abdicates their responsibilities to the people of our State.”

“This case was important not just for the people of Hamilton County but to anyone across the northeast states where this defendant had purportedly inspected critical public infrastructure,” said **District Attorney Purdue**. “I want to thank the Inspector General and her office, as well as the State and federal transportation departments, for the important work they did investigating this case, as well as the Hamilton County jury that returned swift justice in this matter.”

An investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott and State and federal transportation officials found that Ahmad, an employee of a Capital Region engineering firm acting as subcontractor to conduct bridge inspections for the New York State Department of Transportation (“NYSDOT”), inspected the Gilmantown Road bridge in late 2013. The bridge was previously inspected in 2012 when it was found to have various deficiencies. In particular, the 2012 inspection found erosion along a wing wall under the bridge and a “yellow flag” was issued indicating a warning for the bridge but not a “critical” condition.

The deficiencies in the 2012 inspection report were repaired in September 2013 in a project overseen by the Hamilton County Highway Department, but Ahmad’s subsequent inspection report of the same bridge three months after the repairs were made noted the same deficiencies and used much of the same language as the 2012 report, as if it were copied directly from it. A town official at the time doubted an inspection could have been conducted in late 2013 due to ice and snow at the site. The NYSDOT was able to perform an inspection in early 2014 after the snow and ice cleared and found the repairs had been made and that the deficiencies Ahmad cited in his 2013 inspection report did not exist.

The NYSDOT is responsible for inspecting approximately 17,000 bridges across the State and often contracts the inspection work to various private engineering firms. At the time of inspections related to the Hamilton County Bridge at issue in this case, Ahmad worked for DKI Engineering, a Capital Region company subcontracted for NYSDOT inspections work.

Ahmad remains out of jail pending sentencing June 2 in Hamilton County Court.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked the NYSDOT and the United States Department of Transportation for their assistance with the investigation, the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office for their assistance with the arrest and Hamilton County District Attorney Marsha King Purdue for prosecuting this matter.

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