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# PRESS RELEASE

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## Anne Arundel County Man Sentenced for Illegal Dumping of Over 250,000 Scrap Tires in Allegany County

**BALTIMORE, MD (December 18, 2024)** – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced the sentencing of Michel Osei, 48, of Hanover, Maryland, on environmental crimes charges related to the illegal dumping and ultimate abandonment of over 250,000 scrap tires at a site in Allegany County, Maryland.

On October 16, 2024, Osei [pleaded guilty](#) before the Honorable Judge Jeffery S. Getty of the Circuit Court for Allegany County to 17 environmental crimes: one count of unlawful disposal for gain, eight counts of operating a scrap tire facility without a license, and eight counts of improper handling of waste—nuisance.

Judge Getty sentenced Osei to 5 years of incarceration, suspending all but 45 days, 5 years of probation, ordered restitution of \$250,000 to the Allegany County Commissioners and a fine of \$300,000 to the Maryland Clean Water Fund, all suspended.



The investigation was led by the Attorney General's Environmental and Natural Resources Crimes Unit (ENRCU), the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and the Maryland Office of the State Fire Marshal.

The investigation revealed that in June of 2021, Osei approached the Allegany County Office of Economic Development with a proposal to operate a scrap tire recycling facility in the county. Osei claimed the facility would eventually employ up to 50 people and already had millions of dollars of contracts to send the recycled tires overseas. The county offered a land-lease with favorable terms for an industrial parcel bordering the Potomac River at 23302 Westernport Road SW in Westernport in Allegany County. On July 19, 2021, Osei began operations at the facility. Osei and his employees would go on to collect over 100,000 scrap tires from various locations in West Virginia. Those tires were taken to the facility in Westernport. Few, if any, tires were ever removed.

MDE inspectors first became aware of the operation on October 7, 2021. A site inspection and complaint documented approximately 10,000-15,000 scrap tires at that time. The property had no permits, and the tires were stored outside and uncovered, in piles that posed a significant fire hazard. MDE also contacted the Maryland State Office of the Fire Marshal due to the seriousness of the risk of fire.



Between the fall of 2021 and the spring of 2022, MDE and the Fire Marshal ordered Osei to stop operations on multiple occasions. When Osei ultimately abandoned the site in September 2022, it was estimated that over 250,000 scrap tires remained onsite, strewn across the property and packed into tractor trailer containers. Allegany County has since started to clean-up the site.

Scrap tires are tires no longer suitable for their original purpose by virtue of wear, damage, or defect. The handling of scrap tires is regulated by MDE through authority granted by Title 9 of the Environment Article and related regulations. Scrap tires pose a number of health risks to

people and the environment. They may only be transported by a licensed scrap tire hauler. Scrap tires may only be stored, sorted, or processed at licensed facilities in accordance with the terms of a license issued by MDE. MDE has a tiered license system that distinguishes between a “Secondary Scrap Tire Collection Facility,” which is authorized to store up to 1,500 scrap tires, and larger operations designated as either a “Primary Scrap Tire Acceptance Facility” or “Scrap Tire Recycler.” The larger facilities require a more detailed and thorough licensure and approval process similar to the installation of a solid waste acceptance facility or solid waste transfer station requiring review, notice, public hearing, and bonding.

In making today’s announcement, Attorney General Brown thanked the Criminal Division, the Environmental and Natural Resources Crimes Unit, Chief Counsel D’Arcy Talley, Assistant Attorney General Kory H. Lemmert, Chief Investigator Thomas Waugh, and Investigator Ronald Weinreich Jr. Attorney General Brown also thanked partners at the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Maryland Office of the State Fire Marshal, the Allegany County Government, and the State’s Attorney for Allegany County James F. Elliott, for their assistance in this investigation and prosecution.

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