



Press Release

September 19, 2000

For more information, contact:
Ohio Ethics Commission
(614) 466-7090

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FLASK TO GO TO JAIL; PAY FINES AND COSTS

Edward A. Flask, former Director of the Mahoning Valley Sanitary District, appeared today before Judge Richard M. Markus in the Trumbull County Common Pleas Court for sentencing. Flask had pled guilty on June 9, 2000, to nine criminal felony and misdemeanor charges that he misused his MVSD position for his own personal gain. Flask was sentenced to one year, suspended, on each of his guilty pleas to two Felony violations of Having an Unlawful Interest in a Public Contract. He was also sentenced to three months for each of his guilty pleas to two Misdemeanor violations of Soliciting or Receiving Improper Compensation, and to five Misdemeanor violations of having a Conflict of Interest, to be served concurrently in the Trumbull County Jail. Mr. Flask was also fined \$5,000, and ordered to serve three years probation, perform 200 hours of community service, and pay court costs and the costs of the investigation. Each of the Fourth Degree Felony counts carries up to 18 months in prison and a fine of up to \$2,500.00, and each of the First Degree Misdemeanor counts carries up to 6 months in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000.00. The law also prohibits Flask from holding public office or any public employment for seven years.

Special Prosecutor Victor V. Viglucci, who is the Portage County Prosecuting Attorney, stated: "The court recognized that the unethical actions of Mr. Flask as a public official required a jail sentence as part of his punishment. I believe that the sentence by Judge Markus will help restore the public's faith and trust in the officials who serve them."

The indictment against Edward A. Flask and his subsequent sentencing today are the result of an extensive investigation conducted by Special Prosecutor Viglucci, Assistant Special Prosecutor Paul M. Nick, Investigative Counsel for the Ohio Ethics Commission, investigators from the Federal Bureau of Investigation-Youngstown Resident Agency, and investigators for the Ohio Ethics Commission.

David E. Freel, Executive Director of the Ohio Ethics Commission, stated: "The Ohio Ethics Commission is proud of the work done by the Special Prosecutor, Assistant Special

Prosecutor, and by the investigators that culminated in the sentence handed down by the court today."

The two felony pleas resulted from Flask's authorization of a series of purchases by the Mahoning Valley Sanitary District from two vendors, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Ohio and Ohio Edison Company. While dealing with them in his public position, Flask was at the same time being paid as a consultant by these vendors. Flask admitted soliciting and accepting consulting fees in excess of \$1.7 million from Blue Cross/Blue Shield from May 1, 1993 through August 11, 1997, and \$270,000 from Ohio Edison from March 22, 1991 through August 11, 1997.

Flask also admitted soliciting or receiving a total of \$6,493 in improper entertainment and compensation, from the Gilbane Building Company, from July 28, 1992 through August 11, 1997. At the time, Gilbane was doing business with the MVSD as the project manager for the MVSD's multi-million-dollar capital improvement project. Flask admitted that this entertainment was an improper supplement to his compensation as Director of the MVSD.

In addition, Flask admitted soliciting and accepting \$34,000 from Mascaro, Inc. from February 11, 1992 through September 16, 1995. Mascaro, Inc. was a subcontractor to Gilbane Building Company on the MVSD's capital improvement project.

Flask also admitted soliciting or receiving \$3,007 of improper compensation in the form of entertainment and political contributions from McDonald & Company Securities, from March 17, 1994 through June 20, 1996. McDonald & Company Securities was doing business with the MVSD by underwriting bonds. Flask admitted that this was an improper supplement to his compensation as Director of the MVSD.

Flask also pled guilty to Conflict of Interest charges involving the acceptance of money, entertainment or contributions from Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Ohio Edison, McDonald & Company, Gilbane Building Company, and Mascaro, Inc., a subcontractor of Gilbane Building Company on the MVSD capital improvement project.