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EL POLLO RICO RESTAURANT OWNERS SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR
MONEY LAUNDERING AND HARBORING ILLEGAL ALIENS

Defendants Ordered to Forfeit \$7.2 Million in Cash, Properties,
Vehicles and Other Assets

Greenbelt, Maryland - U.S. District Judge Roger W. Titus sentenced Juan Faustino Solano, age 57, of Kensington, Maryland today to 15 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release for money laundering and conspiracy to commit alien harboring in connection with the operation of the El Pollo Rico restaurant in Wheaton, Maryland, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. Judge Titus sentenced Juan's sister, Consuelo Solano, age 69, of Arlington, Virginia last week to two months imprisonment and eight months of home detention for money laundering. Both are required to cooperate with the IRS to help determine and pay back taxes on the operation of the restaurant.

Judge Titus also ordered the Juan Solano and Consuelo Solano to forfeit \$7.2 million derived from the illegal activities, including 13 bank and investor accounts; a life insurance policy; eight properties located in Wheaton, Kensington, Germantown and Silver Spring, Maryland; three vehicles; collectible coins; and jewelry. Moreover, as part of this amount, Consuelo Solano has to forfeit over \$2.1 million in cash found in her home during a search on July 12, 2007.

"Prosecutions such as this case are essential if we want to give law-abiding businesses a fair chance to compete," said U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein.

"Employers who hire illegal aliens off the books and pay them in cash gain an unfair advantage over honest businesspeople who work hard and play by the rules. Consuelo Solano and Juan Solano now face federal prison time for their criminal scheme, and the millions of dollars in profits that they stashed in cash in their homes will be forfeited to the government along with their houses, vehicles,

jewelry and other assets.”

“The message this case sends to companies that knowingly hire and harbor illegal aliens as a business practice is clear - your illegal activity could send you to jail and cost you millions,” said James A. Dinkins, Special Agent in Charge, for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), in Baltimore. “Companies who knowingly harbor illegal aliens are not only breaking the law, they are also creating a magnet that draws foreign nationals to enter the U.S. illegally.”

“IRS-CI is united with the rest of the law enforcement community in our resolve to financially disrupt criminal organizations that commit crimes against our society and the world economy. Money laundering is not a victimless crimes. Not only are innocent people ‘duped’ by various schemes, but the underground, untaxed economy harms the entire nation's economic strength,” stated C. Andre' Martin, Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation Special Agent in Charge.

According to his guilty plea, Juan Solano conspired with others to employ illegal aliens and undocumented workers at the restaurant from January 1999 to July 2007, paying them in cash. To further the conspiracy, Solano did much of the hiring and did not prepare or maintain Employment Eligibility Verification Forms for those employees, which establish the eligibility of an individual to be employed in the United States legally.

In addition, Consuelo and Juan Solano admitted that they conspired to conceal the proceeds from the illegal employment of aliens, and deposited more than \$7 million from the operation of the restaurant into the El Pollo Rico business account from 2002 to 2007. Transfers were made from the El Pollo Rico business account to business and personal accounts in the name of Consuelo and Juan Solano and to the accounts of other co-conspirators. Funds from those deposits were used to pay for numerous personal assets, including property, jewelry, collectible coins, cars and investment accounts.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein praised the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation for their investigative work. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys David I. Salem and Stacy Belf, who are prosecuting the case.

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