



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

United States Attorney's Office
Eastern District of Tennessee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 5, 2021
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**FORMER TVA SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER PLEADS GUILTY TO
FALSIFYING FINANCIAL INFORMATION AS PART OF A
FRAUDULENT SCHEME**

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. – On November 5, 2021, James Christopher Jenkins, aka Chris Jenkins, 60, of Chattanooga entered a guilty plea to one count of making a false official statement, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001 in the Eastern District of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Sentencing has been set for March 11, 2022 at 9:00 a.m., before the Honorable Travis R. McDonough, U.S. District Judge, in the United States District Court at Chattanooga. Jenkins faces a maximum sentence of 5 years in prison and 3 years of supervised release, and \$250,000 in fines.

According to court documents, Jenkins was employed from May 2011 to February 2017 as a Senior Project Manager in the Nuclear Power Group and the Major Projects Group at Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) with fiduciary and management responsibilities which required him to file annual reports disclosing any outside positions, employment, and income. These disclosures are made through an Office of Government Ethics (OGE) Form 450. Government officials review these forms to identify conflicts of interests that may exist between TVA employees and private entities doing business with the TVA or seeking business with the TVA. For instance, a conflict of interest could, among other things, provide a TVA contractor an economic advantage over others and defeat the government's attempt to secure a competitive contract.

TVA employees who are in a position to negotiate with vendors and contractors on behalf of TVA are required to file an annual Confidential Financial Disclosure Report which requires those employees to report certain personal assets, sources of income, and debts, and to report their other outside financial positions, agreements or arrangements. Between 2012 and 2016, Jenkins failed to annually disclose certain debts and income on the Report and sought to profit outside the scope of his employment at TVA. This failure to report led to an actual conflict of interest from which Jenkins personally benefited.

“The integrity of government employees -- especially those in supervisory or senior positions -- is paramount to maintaining the public's trust in the officials who serve the nation. Protecting the federal procurement process from false statements is central to the mission of the Department of Justice. The defendant betrayed the public's trust by failing to disclose these debts and other financial activities. Our office is committed to safeguarding that trust through the

vigorous enforcement of federal laws,” said Acting United States Attorney Francis M. Hamilton III.

“The vast majority of TVA employees serve the people of the valley by generating power, protecting our natural resources, and encouraging job growth through economic development, while also avoiding personal and financial conflicts that would undermine the public trust in TVA. Regrettably, in this instance, Mr. Jenkins failed to live up to that standard. He held a senior role at TVA with authority to negotiate with vendors and award contracts. He failed to disclose numerous conflicts with companies in which he had an ownership interest or owed substantial sums of money. The Tennessee Valley Authority - Office of Inspector General (TVA-OIG) plays an aggressive role in identifying and addressing this type of abuse, and, due to the collaborative efforts of TVA and our law enforcement partners, Mr. Jenkins has now pled guilty to falsifying an ethics disclosure that impacted financial decisions made by TVA. The TVA-OIG would like to thank the United States Attorney’s Office, specifically Assistant U.S. Attorney Steve Neff, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for working hand in hand with our office to investigate this fraudulent activity,” said Jill Matthews, TVA Acting Inspector General.

“Today’s guilty plea represents the FBI’s commitment to investigate these cases. There is zero tolerance for those who exploit their official position for personal gain. It erodes public confidence and undermines the Rule of Law. We want the people we serve to know the FBI along with our law enforcement partners will hold those accountable who betray the public’s trust,” said FBI Special Agent in Charge Joe Carrico.

The investigation was conducted by agents of TVA-OIG and the FBI.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven Neff represented the United States.

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