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**RESIDENT SENTENCED FOR POLLUTING THE AIR BY
ILLEGALLY BURNING METAL WIRES**

El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodríguez announced today the sentencing in the case of a resident who pleaded guilty of violating the Clean Air Act, in the desert area in East El Paso County.

50-year-old Alejandro Aguilar was sentenced today to 70 days in the County jail and ordered to pay court costs after pleading guilty to one count of illegal outdoor burning before Judge Alma Trejo of the County Criminal Court at Law Number One (the Environmental Court).

The offense occurred on or about July 20, 2005, when Alejandro Aguilar and 57 year-old Héctor Morín were burning metal wire in a vacant lot in the desert near the 12300 block of Eastlake Dr., in East El Paso County. The El Paso County Sheriff's Dept. responded to the call and found the two men standing around a large pile of wiring and a red one-gallon gasoline container. Morín pled guilty on December 2006 to one count of illegal outdoor burning and was sentenced to 45 days in jail.

"Illegal outdoor burning is a serious environmental crime which we will prosecute to the fullest extent of the law," said El Paso County Attorney José R. Rodríguez.

"Burning waste, especially the insulation off of copper and metal wiring, is dangerous and bad for the environment because it sends toxic fumes into the air we breathe, and it could potentially harm our drinking water", Rodríguez added.

County Attorney's Office Environmental Prosecutor Cristina Viesca-Santos explained that recently, with the high prices of copper, more residents are reporting individuals who burn

the insulation off the wiring to sell the metal. “The proper method for removing the insulation is to cut and pull it off, and take the waste to the landfill,” Viesca-Santos explained.

Illegal dumping is an on-going problem in the county of El Paso, and the County Attorney’s Office will continue to prosecute such offenders. The penalty for illegal dumping ranges from a fine up to \$10,000 for an individual, or up to 2 years in jail, or both fine and incarceration. For an association or corporation, the fine is up to \$10,000.

To report illegal dumping or other environmental crime, call your local law enforcement agency: 911 if you see it happening; the Environmental Hotline at 1-888-6EL-PASO, El Paso Police Dept. at 832-4400, or El Paso Sheriff’s Dept. at 546-2280.

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