

# SAN FRANCISCO Recology Bosses Use Trash Service For BRIBES AND MONEY LAUNDERING FOR CITY HALL MOB

Bay City News Service

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FILE: A pile of recycled cardboard sits on the ground at Recology's Recycle Central on January 4, 2018 in San Francisco.

Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

SAN FRANCISCO (BCN)

A former manager for San Francisco's garbage collection agency Recology has been charged with bribery and money laundering for allegations of assisting embattled former Department of Public Works director Mohammed Nuru launder over \$1 million, federal prosecutors said Wednesday.

Former Recology Group and Government Community Relations Manager Paul Frederick Giusti, 64, of San Francisco, allegedly provided Nuru with money and benefits worth over \$1 million in order to sway Nuru to act in Recology's favor, prosecutors alleged in a federal complaint.

In one instance, Giusti allegedly agreed to give Nuru \$20,000 to get him to support Recology's efforts to increase "tipping fees" it charged the city for dumping materials at its facility.

To then conceal the bribes, Giusti wrote it off as a "holiday donation" from Recology to the Lefty O'Doul's Foundation for Kids, a non-profit organization for underprivileged children run by restaurateur Nick Bovis.

Bovis was arrested back in January along with Nuru in connection with an unsuccessful scheme to bribe a San Francisco International Airport commissioner to aid Bovis in obtaining a restaurant concession in 2018. Bovis was charged with two counts of fraud, while Nuru was charged with fraud and lying to the FBI.

Prosecutors alleged the money Giusti provided was ultimately used by Bovis to fund annual holiday parties organized by Nuru between 2016 and 2019.

Prosecutors said Recology disguised several payments to Nuru as charitable donations, funneled through not only the Lefty O'Doul's Foundation for Kids but other nonprofits as well.



Mohammed Nuru, director of San Francisco Public Works, center, gestures as he leaves a federal courthouse with attorney Ismail Ramsey, right, in San Francisco, Thursday, Feb. 6, 2020.

Jeff Chiu / Associated Press

"These bribes were laundered through non-profit organizations to disguise their source and to create the false appearance of legitimate charitable intent. In return for these bribes, Nuru helped Recology obtain garbage fee increases approved by the city but paid by an unsuspecting public. As our investigation continues, each charge sheds new light on the ways and means of City Hall corruption," U.S. Attorney David Anderson said in a statement.

In a separate instance, Giusti also arranged for Nuru's son to work at Recology, but once the connection was discovered, Recology terminated him but then arranged for him to work at a nonprofit, paid for by a grant to fund a Recology summer youth intern program, prosecutors said.

A Recology executive once wrote to a subordinate in an email, "Mohammed is the Director of DPW who ultimately signs off on our rates. Needless to say, keeping him happy is important," the complaint said.

It further alleged that, in a separate instance, Giusti created a donation invoice to a nonprofit to conceal Recology paying for the funeral of a DPW employee.

If convicted on the bribery charge, Giusti could face 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. If convicted of laundering, he could face 20 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine, prosecutors said.

Giusti is set to make his initial court appearance on Monday in federal court in San Francisco.

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