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THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
MIDDLE DISTRICT *of* LOUISIANA

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Middle District of Louisiana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 8, 2018

## **Denham Springs Woman Indicted for Theft of Disaster Assistance Funds**

U.S. Attorney Brandon J. Fremin, who also serves as the Executive Director of the National Center for Disaster Fraud, announced today that LISA ELIZABETH CORONA, 37, of Denham Springs, Louisiana, was indicted yesterday by a federal grand jury charging her with submitting false claims to the United States and theft of \$30,644 in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds in relation to the 2016 flooding that affected numerous local areas, to include Livingston Parish.

Following the 2016 flooding that affected 12 parishes in south Louisiana, FEMA funds were available to people who had emergency needs for food, shelter, and clothing because of the flood. In order to qualify for assistance based on home ownership, an individual must have, among other things, resided in the home at the time of the storm.

According to the indictment, CORONA is alleged to have submitted a false application for FEMA assistance for a Denham Springs residence where she did not reside at the time of the August 2016 flooding. In her application, she is also alleged to have lied in asserting that, because of the damage to the Denham Springs residence, she had emergency needs for food, clothing, and shelter.

"Federal disaster assistance funds are designated for the aid of individuals affected by a disaster, and with the intent to return these individuals to the lives they lived before being victimized by disasters," said U.S. Attorney Fremin. "The theft of these funds by criminals results in losses not only to the federal government, but also to actual disaster victims. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Louisiana, together with the National Center for Disaster Fraud and our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, will continue diligent efforts to prosecute those who seek to steal disaster assistance funds and impair the Federal Government's ability to assist true victims of a disaster."

Special Agent in Charge David Green, Houston Field Office, Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, stated, "Working with the U.S. Attorney's Office, the OIG will continue our commitment to identify and aggressively investigate all allegations of fraud to protect the integrity of FEMA programs funded by the taxpayer. Theft of funds from DHS programs intended to help those in need will not be tolerated."

Members of the public who suspect fraud involving disaster relief efforts, or believe they have been the victim of fraud from a person or organization soliciting relief funds on behalf of disaster victims, should contact the National Disaster Fraud Hotline toll free at (866) 720-5721. The telephone line is staffed by a live operator 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also fax information to the Center at (225) 334-4707, or email it to [disaster@leo.gov](mailto:disaster@leo.gov). Learn more about the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud at <http://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud>.

This matter is being handled by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Louisiana and the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul L. Pugliese.

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**Topic(s):**

Disaster Fraud

**Component(s):**

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