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**REMARKS OF DOI COMMISSIONER JOCELYN E. STRAUBER ON ANNOUNCEMENT OF
TWO FORMER HIGH-RANKING FDNY OFFICIALS CHARGED WITH BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION OFFENSES**

Thank you Damian; and thank you to your team of career prosecutors at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, and our law enforcement partners at the FBI, for their hard work on this important case.

DOI's investigation of this matter began in the spring of 2023, when FDNY officials notified us of a possible scheme involving improper payments to two high-ranking leaders of the Bureau of Fire Prevention, an FDNY division that oversees Fire Code compliance, including by reviewing fire-safety plans for commercial and residential properties and conducting inspections of those properties.

I want to thank the Fire Department for this referral and for the longstanding open line of communication and strong relationship that we have with their leadership. All City employees and agencies are legally required to report allegations of corruption and misconduct to DOI, and we do our job best when agencies communicate with us early and often, raising any areas of concern to our attention. When our inquiry into the referral here revealed potential criminal conduct, we promptly teamed up with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and the FBI, our longstanding partners on many matters, so that we could investigate this case together.

DOI brings its expertise in corruption investigations, its knowledge of City operations, and its access to City records and facilities to our law enforcement partnerships. The work we do together is critical, because corruption, particularly by high-level City employees such as those charged in this indictment, undermines the City's ability to serve New Yorkers fairly and equitably, and rightly shakes confidence in the integrity of our public servants.

The charges announced today by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, DOI and the FBI allege that the defendants exploited their high-ranking positions within the FDNY and monetized their authority in order to serve their own financial interests rather than the public. And these charges send the important message that DOI is watching and that our law enforcement partners stand ready to work with us to hold accountable public officials who abuse their power.

Assistant Chief Saccavino and Deputy Assistant Chief Cordasco were senior FDNY officials with over 50 years of collective experience, each earning over \$250,000 annually to oversee the Bureau of Fire Prevention.

As alleged in the indictment, they devised a scheme to exploit a backlog in their division, which made fast-tracking cases a valuable commodity and a means to further enrich themselves. Among other allegations, the defendants, together with a co-conspirator who is a retired FDNY firefighter, collectively

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pocketed over \$190,000 by accelerating approximately 30 projects across New York City. As charged, the defendants identified some of these projects themselves, but most were brought to the defendants by the co-conspirator and retired FDNY firefighter who offered illegitimate expediting services to his clients for a fee. The defendants furthered the charged bribery scheme in a number of ways, including, as detailed in the indictment, by making false statements on mandated City Financial Disclosures that they filed, which obscured their receipt of money from their co-conspirator and his business.

In any investigation we conduct, DOI has a responsibility to promptly address any public safety issues that we may become aware of, while maintaining the confidentiality critical to any criminal investigation. While DOI did not find evidence that the defendants' conduct compromised fire safety, we provided the FDNY with a list of addresses potentially involved in the scheme to re-inspect, and that re-inspection has been completed.

Finally, I want to recognize the dedicated investigators at DOI who tirelessly worked this case with the U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI: Inspector General Audrey Feldman, Deputy Inspector General Arturo Sanchez, Investigative Attorney Jasmine Harris, Director of Audits Laila Yu, and Investigative Auditor YingTong Yu, who are here today; and the supervisors of this investigation, Deputy Commissioners Christopher Ryan and Dominick Zarrella.

Thank you.

An indictment is an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

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