

Rocky Mount Woman Accused Of Hurricane Matthew Recovery Fraud

By Administrator

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Sheila Ruffin, 50, of Rocky Mount, has been charged with 15 counts of Disaster Fraud related to the Hurricane Matthew recovery effort conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). According to the allegations in the Indictment, Ruffin knowingly made materially false, fictitious, and fraudulent statements and representations, and knowingly made and used false writings and documents knowing the same to contain materially false, fictitious, and fraudulent statements and representations, to FEMA, in an application for benefits authorized, transported, transmitted, transferred, disbursed, and paid with FEMA funds in connection with the Presidential Major Disaster Declaration for the State of North Carolina, effective October 10, 2016. Ruffin is alleged to have made false statements and submitted fraudulent documentation in connection with applications for FEMA assistance following Hurricane Matthew. From January 31, 2017 to January 29, 2018, RUFFIN was awarded more than \$11,000.00 in rental assistance to which she was not entitled.

If convicted of the Disaster Fraud charges, RUFFIN would face a maximum penalty of 30 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, a term of supervised release of not more than 3 years, and restitution. The charges and allegations contained in the Indictment are merely accusations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

Investigation of this case was conducted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorney Toby Lathan is prosecuting the case for the government.

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 live operators 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also fax information to the Center at (225) 334-4707, or email it to disaster@leo.gov. Learn more about the National Center for Disaster Fraud at www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud and watch a public service announcement here. Tips for the public on how to avoid being victimized of fraud are at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/tips-avoiding-fraudulent-charitable-contribution-schemes>.

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