Del Norte Triplicate

NEWS

Former Ceo Of Tribal Telecom Subsidiary Pleads Guilty To Embezzling Over $500,000 From Yurok Tribe

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SAN FRANCISCO – Jessica Engle pleaded guilty in federal court yesterday afternoon to embezzling more than $500,000 from the Yurok Tribe.

Engle, 42, of Gold Hill, Oregon, was indicted by a federal grand jury on Sept. 25, 2024, on charges of embezzling approximately $579,574 from an Indian tribal organization and theft from programs receiving federal funds. She pleaded guilty to both counts in the indictment. In connection with pleading guilty, Engle admitted that she embezzled funds from the Yurok Tribe while she served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Yurok Telecommunications Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Yurok Tribe, and converted the funds to her own use.

United States Attorney Craig H. Missakian and FBI Special Agent in Charge Sanjay Virmani made the announcement.

Engle's sentencing hearing is scheduled for Jan. 14, 2026, before Senior U.S. District Court Judge Maxine M. Chesney. Engle faces a maximum statutory penalty of 10 years in prison and a $250,000 fine for the count of theft from programs receiving federal funds in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 666 and five years in prison

and a $250,000 fine for the count of embezzlement from an Indian tribal organization in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1163. Any sentence will be imposed by the court after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. § 3553.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Colin Sampson and Sophia Cooper are prosecuting the case with the assistance of Laurie Worthen. The prosecution is the result of an investigation by the FBI. The U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI appreciate the assistance of the Yurok Tribal Police.