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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

DATE: January 24, 2020

### **DA STOLLSTEIMER ANNOUNCES ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES UNIT, PLEDGES TO SUPPORT DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES' EFFORTS TO PROTECT RESIDENTS AND PROSECUTE ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES**

**Media, PA-** Delco DA Jack Stollsteimer today announced the new Environmental Crimes Unit in the District Attorney's Office. This Unit will collaborate with the Department of Emergency Services, County Council, and other county offices to investigate environmental hazards that threaten the health and safety of Delaware County. Stollsteimer said, "Delaware County is the first in the region to create a unit in the DA's office devoted to environmental crime. As part of our Smart on Crime strategy, we are coordinating our efforts across the county to improve accountability for environmental impacts. We're also targeting environmental crimes throughout the region and expect to collaborate with our colleagues in neighboring counties and in Harrisburg."

Tim Boyce, Director of Delaware County's Emergency Services Department, applauds the new Environmental Crimes Unit. "This Unit will be a critical partner for raising awareness about environmental crimes like illegal dumping. In fact, we're working together now to coordinate strategies for responding to environmental calls. The joint investigative capabilities of Emergency Services and the DA's Office will enable us to be more proactive in addressing environmental threats before they become catastrophes. Not every case will rise to the level of criminal activity, but when it does, we're glad to have partners in the District Attorney's Office."

Newly elected County Councilwoman Elaine Paul Schaefer hailed the announcement. "The DA's Environmental Crimes Unit is yet another important tool the county will have to address complicated public

health and safety issues. We look forward to working with the DA's Office on these issues, to protect and improve the health of all our communities," she said.

Assistant District Attorney Melissa Muroff serves as Chief of the new Environmental Crimes Unit. She comes to the DA's office with decades of experience in environmental design and water management. She's collaborated with nongovernmental organizations, industry and labor organizations, and community groups to advocate for progressive water policy and environmental justice. She also brings expertise in the health impacts of environmental exposures. Muroff adds, "Too many Delaware County residents are struggling with environmental impacts stemming from illicit business practices and violations of state environmental laws. We are going into these communities, and we are listening to residents. Our goals are to better protect Delaware County citizens and their right to a clean environment under the Environmental Rights Amendment of the Pennsylvania Constitution." The Pennsylvania Environmental Rights Amendment asserts the right of all Pennsylvanians to clean air and water and the preservation of the natural environment (Pennsylvania Constitution, Art. I, Sec. 27).

The District Attorney and the Criminal Investigations Division remind anyone in Delaware County who observes suspicious activity call to 911 immediately and provide the most specific and accurate details possible to assist law enforcement agencies investigating the call for service.

Contact:

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