

## News Release

CONTACT Ryan Brown  
PHONE 651-556-6397  
E-MAIL [ryan.brown@state.mn.us](mailto:ryan.brown@state.mn.us)

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Contact: Ryan Brown

[ryan.brown@state.mn.us](mailto:ryan.brown@state.mn.us)

### **New Germany couple charged with multiple tax crimes**

**ST. PAUL, Minn.** – The Minnesota Department of Revenue announced that the Carver County Attorney’s Office recently charged Lawrence Phillip Kielbasa and Jennifer Lynn Hoese-Kielbasa, both of New Germany, with 15 tax-related felonies each. They are each charged with seven counts of failing to file sales tax returns, seven counts of failing to pay sales tax, and one count of distributing cigarette and tobacco products without a license.

According to the complaint, the Kielbasas, owners of Watertown Fuel and Food, failed to file sales tax returns and failed to pay sales tax for their business each month from December 2017 through June 2018. Department investigators further determined that the couple had failed to file sales tax returns and failed to pay sales tax since July 2014, despite numerous letters from the department demanding that they file and pay, the complaint states. Ms. Hoese-Kielbasa allegedly admitted that the couple failed to file their sales tax returns and that she knew the business collected sales tax, but had not submitted the money to the state. The Kielbasas owe more than \$45,000 in unpaid sales tax from December 2017 through June 2018.

Additionally, Watertown Fuel and Food continued selling cigarette and tobacco products despite having its tobacco license revoked by the City of Watertown in February 2018, the complaint states.

Each tax-related felony charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a \$10,000 fine, or both. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Many of the department’s criminal case referrals come from public tips. The Minnesota Department of Revenue has a 24-hour tip line for anyone who suspects that a person or business is violating Minnesota tax laws. Local callers may dial 651-297-5195 or call toll-free by dialing 1-800-657-3500. Tips can also be submitted to the department by email at [tax.fraud@state.mn.us](mailto:tax.fraud@state.mn.us). Tipsters may choose to remain anonymous.

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