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July 26, 2023

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

People v. Justin Gilbert 2022CF616

The distribution of illegal drugs is a serious problem in Vermilion County and negatively impacts the quality of life of our residents and creates heartbreak in the families whose loved ones suffer from drug addiction.

On July 17, 2023, Vermilion County Circuit Judge Charles Hall sentenced Justin Gilbert to 10 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections after pleading guilty to the offense of Possession of Methamphetamine. This offense is a class X felony and is punishable from 6-30 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. A class X felony now carries 18 months of mandatory supervised release (*i.e. parole*), which Gilbert will serve after his incarceration.

Evidence was presented to the Court that on December 2, 2022, Justin Gilbert was driving north of Hoopeston when a Vermilion County Sheriff's Deputy conducted a traffic stop due to Gilbert exiting the roadway and being unable to maintain his lane of traffic. While the deputy was discussing the nature of the stop with Gilbert, another deputy walked a narcotics detection K9 around the vehicle. The K9 gave a positive alert for the odor of narcotics inside the vehicle, which was then searched by the Sheriff's Deputies. A clear plastic Ziploc bag was located inside a toolbox in close proximity to the K9's finalized alert. The bag, containing a large amount of suspected crystal methamphetamine was analyzed by the Illinois State Police Crime Lab, which yielded a result of methamphetamine, weighing approximately 450 grams. Gilbert and his passenger were interviewed and his passenger admitted that they had driven to Hoopeston from Rantoul, Illinois to get the methamphetamine. Agents of the Vermilion Metropolitan Enforcement Group assisted in this investigation.

State's Attorney Jacqueline Lacy thanked the Vermilion County Sheriff's Department, the Vermilion County Metropolitan Group, and the Hoopeston Police Department for their combined efforts in this investigation. "We appreciate the determination of our law enforcement agencies in getting dangerous drugs out of our community. We want to send a strong message to drug dealers that we will use the powers of the law to hold you accountable from distributing illegal drugs in our community," stated State's Attorney Jacqueline Lacy.