

Volkswagen to pay total of \$4.3 billion to resolve criminal, civil actions

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WASHINGTON – Volkswagen has agreed to plead guilty to three criminal felony counts and to pay a \$2.8 billion criminal penalty as a result of the company’s long-running scheme to sell thousands of diesel vehicles in the U.S. by using a defeat device to cheat on mandated emissions tests.

In addition, the company has agreed to pay \$1.5 billion in civil penalties to resolve a variety of environmental, customs, and financial claims.

The announcement was made Jan. 11 in Washington, D.C. at a press conference with U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch, FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, Detroit FBI Special Agent in Charge David Gelios, and a number of other federal government officials.

The 16-month criminal investigation into Volkswagen was conducted by the FBI and the Environmental Protection Agency’s Criminal Investigation Division. Along with the actions taken against the company, a federal grand jury in the Eastern District of Michigan returned an indictment today charging six VW executives and employees for their roles in the nearly 10-year conspiracy.

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The investigation revealed that VW falsely advertised that its vehicles complied with federal anti-pollution measures when, according to Attorney General Lynch, “hundreds of thousands of cars that VW sold in the United States were pumping illegal levels of nitrogen oxides into the atmosphere—up to 40 times more than amounts permitted.”

Turns out that the vehicles were equipped with cheating software that circumvented the U.S. testing process.

“Consumers expect that companies tell the truth about their products. If environmentally conscious buyers are told they are purchasing green cars, then they should be getting, in fact, green cars—not cars that spew out pollution,” FBI Deputy Director McCabe said.

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