

# Former Trump adviser Flynn pleads guilty to lying to FBI

Flynn will cooperate with investigation

By ERIC TUCKER and CHAD DAY  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Michael Flynn, President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, pleaded guilty today to lying to the FBI, becoming the first Trump White House official to face criminal charges and admit guilt so far in the wide-ranging election investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller.

Flynn also agreed to cooperate with Mueller's probe, which focuses on Russian meddling in the 2016 election and possible coordination between Russia and

Trump's team in the campaign that sent the Republican businessman to the White House.

Court papers make clear that Flynn knows the identities of at least two members of Trump's transition team who were intimately aware of his outreach to Russian government officials in the weeks before the inauguration. Mueller's prosecutors did not reveal the names of the officials, but indicated they were senior and within Trump's inner circle.

Trump ignored reporters' shouted questions as he welcomed the Libyan prime minister to the White House, and aides canceled media access to a later meeting between the two.

Flynn was an early and vocal Trump supporter on the campaign trail and was present for consequen-



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster

**Former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn was fired last February after he misled Vice President Mike Pence and other senior officials about his contacts with Russian intermediaries.**

tial moments in the campaign, the following transition period and the early days of Trump's presidency, making him a valuable poten-

tial tool for prosecutors and agents. His business dealings and foreign interactions have made him a central focus of Mueller's investigation.

Trump's former national security adviser admitted to lying about his conversations with Russia's ambassador to the United States during the transition period before Trump's inauguration.

In a statement, Flynn, a retired Army lieutenant general said he accepted responsibility for his actions and added: "My guilty plea and agreement to cooperate with the Special Counsel's Office reflect a decision I made in the best interests of my family and of our country."

Flynn is the fourth former Trump associate to face charges in the investigation, the first who actually served in Trump's White House. He has been under investigation for a wide range of allegations, including lobbying work on behalf of Turkey, but the fact that he was charged only with a single count of

false statements suggests he is cooperating with Mueller in exchange for leniency.

White House lawyer Ty Cobb sought to distance the plea from Trump himself, saying, "Nothing about the guilty plea or the charge implicates anyone other than Mr. Flynn."

Early on in his administration, Trump had taken a particular interest in the status of the Flynn investigation. Former FBI Director James Comey, whose firing in May precipitated the appointment of Mueller as special counsel, has said Trump had asked him in a private Oval Office meeting to consider ending the investigation into Flynn. Comey has said the encounter unnerved him so much that he prepared an internal memo about it. The White House has denied that assertion.

## Oregon's 18 timber counties to get \$1.4M

Associated Press

ROSEBURG — Financially strapped counties in western Oregon that rely on logging revenue will receive nearly \$1.4 million that had been withheld by the federal government due to budget caps, authorities said Thursday.

The Association of O&C Counties — commonly called the "timber counties" — said Thursday the counties will see the funds soon.

The 18 counties, which include Columbia and Tillamook but not Clatsop County, customarily receive a share of

timber receipts from logging on 2.1 million acres to compensate them for the loss of revenue when the Bureau of Land Management took over the acreage. But nearly 7 percent was withheld in 2016 because of a governmentwide mandate to cut federal spending by 6.9 percent.

"When we received our timber payments in January for fiscal year 2016, we were shocked to find they were short by 6.9 percent," said Douglas County Commissioner Tim Freeman. "Our budgets are already under terrible pressure and the sequestration made a

bad situation even worse."

The cuts happen when U.S. government spending exceeds certain budget caps.

The counties have struggled from a sharp decline in logging over the past several decades. Douglas County was even forced to close its libraries this year because of lack of public funds.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said Thursday the BLM will issue payments totaling \$19.5 million to the 18 counties, including the \$1.4 million.

"My next priority is ensuring that these lands continue to provide sustainable timber har-

vests that support the community and strengthen the health of the forest," Zinke said in a statement.

Freeman, who is also president of the Association of O&C Counties, credited Zinke for working with the association to persuade the Office of Management and Budget to release the sequestered funds.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, a Republican from Hood River, said the money "will be critical to funding essential county services from law enforcement and emergency operations to schools and infrastructure projects."

## Warrenton promotes city engineer to public works director

Stelzig had been serving as interim director

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ  
The Daily Astorian

Warrenton's city engineer will take over as public works director.

Collin Stelzig had already been serving as interim director since the departure of Jim Dunn in September. Stelzig, who grew up in Tillamook, has worked with the city, first as a consultant and more recently as an employee, for more than a decade.

When he was hired as city engineer two years ago, he didn't have much interest in running a department, but that changed as he got to know the other city employees and the public works employees in particular.

"Everybody's got a lot of energy and wants to do better by the city," he said.

As public works direc-

tor, he will lead the city's largest department, overseeing 19 full-time employees and managing capital improvement projects for water, sewer, stormwater, city parks and city streets and trails. Public works staff maintain 38 pump stations, 80 lane miles of streets and 10 miles of levees.

The department also includes a water treatment plant, a 17.5 million gallon reservoir for raw water and two 3.5 million gallon reservoir tanks for treated water.

For Stelzig, the first big project on his plate is to finish the city's water master plan, which hasn't been updated in close to 20 years.

"It's a pretty big deal," he said of the plan. "We have a lot of information to give the commission."

Stelzig's promotion leaves Warrenton without a city engineer. The city contracts out for some engineering services and City Manager Linda Engbretson says she hopes to revamp the position, turning it into "more of a project manager/engineering tech position."

## Portland City Council supports roadway tolling

Congestion in Rose Quarter

By AMELIA TEMPLETON  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — The Portland City Council has unanimously approved a resolution in support of tolling to ease traffic on Interstates 5 and 205.

At the crux of the debate is the stretch of I-5 that cuts through the city's Rose Quarter.

The Oregon Department of Transportation says it's often backed up for 12 hours a day.

The state Legislature has approved a \$400 million plan to add lanes and improve it, but also directed the Oregon Transportation Commission to develop a proposal for tolling

on I-5 and I-205 in the Portland region.

Critics say widening the highway will just encourage more people to drive — a problem transportation planners call "induced demand."

Portland Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who runs the city transportation bureau, said he thinks the state should try tolling before it moves forward with the freeway expansions.

"Let me be clear: In my opinion, congestion pricing should happen in these corridors before any shovels break ground," he said.

Under congestion pricing, the cost of using a road or bridge rises depending on the time of day or amount of traffic. It's a strategy that a number of cities have adopted recently, including London, Stockholm, New York and Seattle.

The City Council's resolution also directed the city's transportation bureau to study whether congestion pricing strategies could improve other bottlenecks.

Saltzman and Mayor Ted Wheeler said they see congestion pricing as a key strategy to ease the city's growing pains while raising new revenue for badly needed investments in street maintenance and public transit.

A variety of transportation and environmental organizations testified in support of the resolution, including the Port of Portland, Portland Walks

and the Oregon Environmental Council.

Opposition came from members of the group No More Freeway Expansion. They say the council needs to more forcefully oppose the state's proposal to widen the highways.

Economist Joe Cortright called congestion pricing the only way to reduce congestion in an urban setting.

"What this project amounts to, effectively then, is a half a billion dollars to the freeway gods or the world's most expensive piece of performance art," he said.

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