

Coin recycler plans audit to prove innocence

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PITTSBURGH — Coin recycler and exporter Wealthy Max Ltd. plans to hold a public audit of 13 tonnes of damaged U.S. coins in an effort to prove to government agencies that the coins are legitimate.

The Hong Kong-based company and several other recyclers have been accused by federal prosecutors of defrauding the U.S. Mint of nearly \$5.5 million by submitting counterfeit coins to the agency's mutilated currency reimbursement program ([amm.com, March 31](#)).

Plans for the audit are being finalized, according to Washington-based law firm GeyerGorey LLP, which is representing Wealthy Max in the case. The audit will be conducted by former U.S. law enforcement agents, with the findings shared with all relevant U.S. government agencies, the law firm said.

"Wealthy Max has complete faith in the U.S. legal system and the integrity and competence of the officials and agents involved in this investigation, and is ready to cooperate in every way possible to resolve the government's concerns," attorney Bradford L. Geyer said.

The U.S. Mint temporarily suspended the mutilated coin buyback program for six months on Oct. 29 due to the "possibility of unlawful activity on the exchange program," according to the Federal Register.

The Mint said it will "assess the security of the program and develop additional safeguards, as necessary, to ensure the integrity of United States coinage." Uncurrent coins—those which have been materially worn or reduced in weight through excessive use—will continue to be accepted by the agency.

Geyer described the Mint's decision to suspend the program and further investigate the sourcing of coins as "a very positive development," adding that Wealthy Max "will adhere to whatever protocols are developed during this suspension."

"Our recent interactions with other officials involved in this case have been very satisfactory and productive. We are confident that as the U.S. officials gain a better understanding of the scope and nature of the scrap recycling business in China, where Wealthy Max sources its damaged coins, they will see that this is a highly reputable company that is conducting its business with the U.S. Mint honestly and transparently," Geyer said.

A law firm spokesman told *AMM* that representatives from the U.S. Treasury Department and Justice Department have not responded to a request to attend the audit.

Wealthy Max attorneys last month filed a motion to dismiss a civil forfeiture case filed in U.S. District Court of New Jersey by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Newark ([amm.com, Oct. 21](#)), and is attempting to recover nearly \$2.39 million from the U.S. Treasury for coins submitted to the U.S. Mint's mutilated currency redemption program, according to GeyerGorey.

The U.S. attorney's amended civil forfeiture complaint claims the company defrauded the Mint of more than \$47 million between early 2005 and June 2014.

The U.S. Mint incurred costs of approximately \$205.9 million for redeeming mutilated and uncurrent coins over the past 15 years, according to the agency's annual reports from 2001 to 2014.

Brad MacAulay

bmacaulay@amm.com