

# Jarchow campaign: Eric Toney again prosecutes business owners, sides with government bureaucrats

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[Balsam Lake, Wis.] – A new [article](#) published today by Empower Wisconsin brings light to a concerning situation in Fond du Lac County where Eric Toney is prosecuting a 70-year old small business owner who is working to properly navigate the Department of Natural Resources' confusing bureaucracy. Despite her efforts to work with the DNR to ensure her business' compliance, Toney "is prosecuting Woolhether on four citations totaling potentially thousands of dollars." Her violation? Unknowingly carrying a crayfish species that DNR agents themselves couldn't identify without conducting an internet search.

This is yet the latest example of Toney's willingness to go after well-intentioned citizens and business owners, and it's part of a troubling pattern. In 2020, [Toney prosecuted](#) a series of individuals for violating Democrat Tony Evers' illegal Safer at Home Order.

In response, Adam Jarchow made the following statement: "Time and again when Eric Toney had an opportunity to defend small businesses from government overreach, he chooses bureaucrats over small businesses."

Excerpts from the article can be found below:

*DNR strong-arms small pet shops in 'Operation Crusty Crab'*  
*M.D. Kittle – Empower Wisconsin*  
*May 4, 2022*

Sharon Woolhether says she's never had a parking ticket before two plain-clothed

Department of Natural Resources agents walked into her small tropical fish store and berated her for carrying a prohibited species of crayfish.

**“It was absolutely insane. They were just rude and nasty,” said the 70-year-old owner of Natural World Aquariums on Fond du Lac’s Main Street. “I’ve never broken any law in any way and they were horrible to me. It was like I was a mass murderer or something.”**

Woolhether, a local business owner with a big heart known for taking in unwanted pets, was one of several targets of a two-year, statewide investigation the DNR ridiculously dubbed “Operation Crusty Crab.” The agency, with the help of local prosecutors, is looking to hit retailers and wholesalers with a combined \$42,000 in fines.

The Fond du Lac County District Attorney’s office, led by Republican Wisconsin attorney general candidate Eric Toney, is prosecuting Woolhether on four citations totaling potentially thousands of dollars. Her trial is set for July, two years after the DNR agents busted her for possessing tiny crawdads. Curiously, Woolhether is being charged with carrying a species that she said the DNR wardens had to Google to identify while they were in the store, working an investigation with an incorrect name.

...

‘Singled out’

The bigger concern may be what some say is the disparity in the investigations and prosecutions.

Operation Crusty Crab appears to have targeted smaller retailers, not big-box stores.

Woolhether said she’s tried to explain the situation to Toney’s office, “but it falls on deaf ears.”

**“I feel like we are the store being singled out the way the local supper Club was singled out for COVID-19 violations in 2020,” she said, referring to the 10 criminal complaints the district attorney filed related to violations of Gov. Tony Evers’ COVID-19 stay-at-home order. The individuals were charged with misdemeanors and faced up to 30 days in**

**jail and a \$500 fine. The owner of the Sunset on the Water, a Fond du Lac tavern, was among those charged.**

...

Everson says Natural World Aquariums, operated in large part by animal-loving volunteers, brings in less than \$10,000 a year in income. The attorney said his client cannot continue to operate the pet store “with these types of fines and selective prosecution.”

**“We do a lot of good for the community but don’t make much money,” Woolhether said. “We have been told if we don’t fork over the money the District Attorney is going to file more citations or even criminal charges.”**

You can read the entire article [here](#).