



# Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1977

AT  
202-739-2014

The Department of Justice today filed a civil antitrust suit charging two Texas trade associations with conspiring to fix the rates for interstate truck transportation of fresh fruits and vegetables from the Rio Grande Valley.

The two associations are the Texas Citrus and Vegetable Growers and Shippers, a nonprofit corporation, and the Greater Texas Motor Transportation Broker Association.

Attorney General Griffin B. Bell said the civil suit, charging a violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, was filed in U. S. District Court in Brownsville, Texas.

The shippers' association, located near Harlingen, Texas, has as members virtually all companies engaged in the car lot or truck lot sale and shipment of fresh produce from the lower Rio Grande Valley.

The membership of the brokers' association, which has headquarters in Pharr, Texas, includes truck brokers who, for a fee or commission, arrange the employment of trucks to transport fresh produce from the lower Rio Grande Valley.

The complaint charges that, beginning at least as early as 1969 and continuing to the present, both associations and their members have violated Section 1 of the Sherman Act by:

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- preparing and circulating rate schedules for the interstate transportation of fresh produce by truck; and

- encouraging adherence to such rate schedules.

According to the complaint, the conspiracy has had the following effects:

- rates for interstate transportation of fresh produce by truck from the lower Rio Grande Valley have been fixed, stabilized, and maintained at artificial and noncompetitive levels;

- competition in the market for truck services has been restrained; and

- shippers, truckers, and purchasers of fresh produce from the lower Rio Grande Valley have been deprived of the benefits of competition in the market for truck services.

In 1975, fresh produce worth more than \$125 million was shipped from the lower Rio Grande Valley, which accounts for the bulk of fresh produce grown in Texas.

According to the complaint, shippers' association members accounted for the bulk of those shipments.

During the complaint period, truck brokers arranged transportation for approximately half of all truck shipments of fresh produce from the lower Rio Grande Valley.

Donald I. Baker, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division, said that the complaint asks that the defendants be permanently enjoined from continuing or renewing the combination and conspiracy alleged

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therein, or from adopting or following any other agreement or understanding having a similar purpose or effect.

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