



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1982

AT
(202) 633-2007

The Department of Justice today filed a civil antitrust suit against the All Coast Fishermen's Marketing Association, Inc., of Charleston, Oregon, alleging that the association violated Section 1 of the Sherman Act by conspiring to restrain competition in the sale of seafood.

Attorney General William French Smith said that the complaint was filed in U.S. District Court in Portland, Oregon.

William F. Baxter, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division, said the complaint alleged that, beginning in 1971 and continuing to the present, All Coast conspired to fix prices paid by processors of seafood and commercial fishermen and to eliminate competition among the fishermen in sales to processors.

According to the complaint, the Association, which represents its member commercial fishermen in the marketing of salmon, crab, shrimp, and black cod, was formed pursuant to the Fishermen's Collective Marketing Act of 1934, under which some joint activities between members of the association have a limited exemption from the antitrust laws.

Baxter stated, however, that members of a cooperative cannot engage in joint pricing and marketing activities with nonmembers, and cannot act jointly to compel nonmembers to join the association or to comply with its prices or policies.

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According to the suit, members of the defendant agreed with nonmembers on the price of seafood; agreed with nonmembers not to fish until a price had been fixed; compelled nonmembers, through threats and harassment, to refrain from fishing until a price was fixed and to sell fish at All Coast's price; and required processors to collect fees on all seafood delivered, including seafood from nonmembers.

The complaint states that in 1980 the dollar value of crab, shrimp, and salmon delivered to processors by commercial fisherman Oregon was approximately \$37 million.

The suit asks that All Coast be enjoined from continuing or renewing the conduct alleged in the complaint.