



# Department of Justice

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**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FILES COMPLAINT AND PROPOSED  
CONSENT AGREEMENT IN MAINE NATIONAL BANK ACQUISITION**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Department of Justice today filed a civil antitrust suit challenging the proposed acquisition of the New Maine National Bank of Portland, Maine, by Fleet/Norstar Financial Group Inc. of Providence, Rhode Island. At the same time, the Department filed a proposed consent decree to resolve the dispute by requiring Fleet/Norstar to divest specified bank branches in Bangor, Pittsfield and Presque Isle, Maine.

New Maine is one of three "bridge" banks created by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) in its capacity as receiver of the failed Bank of New England Corporation. In April, the FDIC announced it would sell the three bridge banks to Fleet/Norstar. The acquisition was approved by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System July 1, 1991.

In its complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Portland, Maine, the Department alleged that the proposed acquisition would violate Section 7 of the Clayton Act by lessening competition in the provision of business banking services such as checking accounts and loans to small and medium-size businesses in Bangor, Presque Isle-Caribou and Pittsfield, Maine.

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Fleet/Norstar and New Maine National Bank are two of the largest of a small number of firms offering business banking services in each of the three geographic areas.

Assistant Attorney General James F. Rill, head of the Antitrust Division, said, "We believe it is essential that competitive banking markets be preserved in the resolution of bank failures. In cases such as this one, appropriate divestitures can preserve competition without interfering with the other substantial public benefits associated with the transaction."

The proposed consent decree directs Fleet/Norstar to divest certain bank branch assets and deposits in Bangor, Presque Isle and Pittsfield.

The Department said the sale of the branches will preserve competition in these areas by facilitating the entry of a new provider of business banking services or strengthening an existing, small provider of those services.

The court must approve the proposed decree following expiration of a 60-day comment period in compliance with the Antitrust Procedures and Penalties Act, 15 U.S.C., Sec. 16 (b)-(h).

The Department cooperated extensively with the Maine Attorney General's office in investigating the transaction, Rill

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said. In light of the proposed settlement, Maine decided to forego its own antitrust suit challenging the transaction.

Rill said, "This is another good example of how cooperation between the states and the federal antitrust enforcement agencies can advance the public interest in an efficient manner."

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