



Department of Justice

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AT
(202) 514-2007
TDD (202) 514-1888

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FILES ANTITRUST SUIT, PROPOSED CONSENT
DECREE IN MERGER OF TWO ATLANTA OUTDOOR ADVERTISING COMPANIES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Department of Justice's Antitrust Division today filed a suit to block the merger of the two largest outdoor advertising firms in Atlanta, Georgia. At the same time, the parties filed a proposed consent decree to settle the suit.

The suit was filed in U.S. District Court in Atlanta against Outdoor Systems Inc., Atlanta's second largest outdoor advertising firm, which proposes to acquire Capitol Outdoor Advertising Inc., the largest outdoor advertising firm in Atlanta. Outdoor Systems has about 24 percent of all billboards, while Capitol has about 39 percent of all billboards in the Atlanta area.

Outdoor advertising, which includes all forms of billboard advertising, is approximately a \$40 million market in the Atlanta area.

"Outdoor's acquisition of its major rival would substantially reduce competition in the outdoor advertising

(MORE)

industry by creating a firm with about 63 percent of all billboards in the Atlanta area," said Anne K. Bingaman, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division. "If the transaction were to go forward the resulting firm would be able to raise advertising fees to outdoor advertising consumers."

Under the proposed consent decree, Outdoor Systems would be required to divest its existing outdoor advertising business in Atlanta. It would then operate Capitol's Atlanta business.

Bingaman noted that the proposed consent decree will preserve free and open competition in the outdoor advertising industry in the Atlanta area.

As required by the Tunney Act, the proposed consent decree and the Department's competitive impact statement will be published in the Federal Register. Any person may comment on the proposed decree by submitting their comments to the Department. After the 60-day public comment period, the United States will reply to any public comments and will seek entry of the decree by the court.

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