

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

COOKSON GROUP PLC,
COOKSON AMERICA INC.,
FOSECO PLC, and
FOSECO METALLURGICAL INC.,

Defendants.

Civil No. 1:2008 CV 00389

JUDGE: Hon. R.M. Urbina

DECK TYPE: Antitrust

Filed:

**MOTION AND MEMORANDUM OF
THE UNITED STATES IN SUPPORT OF ENTRY OF FINAL JUDGMENT**

Pursuant to Section 2(b) of the Antitrust Procedures and Penalties Act, 15 U.S.C.

§ 16(b)-(h) (“APPA”), plaintiff, the United States of America (“United States”) moves for entry of the proposed Final Judgment filed in this civil antitrust proceeding. The proposed Final Judgment may be entered at this time without further hearing if the Court determines that entry is in the public interest. The Competitive Impact Statement (“CIS”), filed in this matter on March 4, 2008, explains why entry of the proposed Final Judgment would be in the public interest. The United States is filing simultaneously with this Motion and Memorandum a Certificate of Compliance setting forth the steps taken by the parties to comply with all applicable provisions of the APPA and certifying that the statutory waiting period has expired.

I. Background

On March 4, 2008, the United States filed a civil antitrust Complaint alleging that the

proposed acquisition of Foseco plc (“Foseco”) by Cookson Group plc (“Cookson”) would substantially lessen competition in violation of Section 7 of the Clayton Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 18. Cookson and Foseco both manufacture and sell isostatically pressed carbon bonded ceramics products (“CBCs”), which are used to control the flow and enhance the quality of steel produced in the continuous casting steelmaking process. The Complaint alleges Cookson’s proposed acquisition of Foseco would combine two of only three North American manufacturers of certain CBCs - ladle shrouds and stopper rods - that sell to U.S. customers. As alleged in the Complaint, the transaction would remove a significant competitor and independent bidder in the already highly concentrated and difficult-to-enter North American markets for ladle shrouds and stopper rods, thereby harming consumers. Accordingly, the Complaint seeks to permanently enjoin the proposed acquisition by requesting a judgment that the acquisition violates Section 7 of the Clayton Act.

At the same time the Complaint was filed, the United States filed a Hold Separate Stipulation and Order (“HSSO”) and a proposed Final Judgment, which are designed to eliminate the anticompetitive effects of the acquisition, and a CIS. The Court signed and entered the HSSO on March 20, 2008. The proposed Final Judgment requires Cookson, within 90 days after the filing of the Complaint, or five days after notice of the entry of the Final Judgment by the Court, whichever is later, to divest, as a viable business operation, the Divestiture Business, which means Foseco’s entire business engaged in the manufacture and sale of CBCs in the United States.¹ If defendant does not complete the divestiture within the prescribed time, then, under the terms of the proposed Final Judgment, this Court will appoint a trustee to sell the

¹ The defendants completed the divestiture, in compliance with the terms of the proposed Final Judgment, on April 11, 2008.

Divestiture Business. The HSSO and the proposed Final Judgment require defendant to preserve, maintain and continue to operate the Divestiture Business in the ordinary course of business, including reasonable efforts to maintain and increase sales and revenues. The CIS explains the basis for the Complaint and the reasons why entry of the proposed Final Judgment would be in the public interest.

The HSSO provides that the proposed Final Judgment may be entered by the Court after the completion of the procedures required by the APPA. Entry of the proposed Final Judgment would terminate this action, except that the Court would retain jurisdiction to construe, modify, or enforce the provisions of the proposed Final Judgment and to punish violations thereof.

II. Compliance with the APPA

The APPA requires a sixty-day period for the submission of public comments on a proposed Final Judgment. *See* 15 U.S.C. § 16(b). In compliance with the APPA, the United States filed the CIS on March 4, 2008; published the proposed Final Judgment and CIS in the *Federal Register* on March 18, 2008 (*see United States v. Cookson plc, et al*, 73 Fed. Reg. 14489); and published summaries of the terms of the proposed Final Judgment and CIS, together with directions for the submission of written comments relating to the proposed Final Judgment, in *The Washington Post* for seven days beginning on April 4, 2008 and ending on April 10, 2008.

The sixty-day public comment period terminated on May 17, 2008, and the United States received no public comments. The United States is filing a Certificate of Compliance simultaneously with this Motion and Memorandum that states all the requirements of the APPA have been satisfied. It is now appropriate for the Court to make the public interest determination required by 15 U.S.C. § 16(e) and to enter the proposed Final Judgment.

III. Standard of Judicial Review

The Clayton Act, as amended by the APPA, requires that proposed consent judgments in antitrust cases brought by the United States be subject to a sixty-day comment period, after which the Court shall determine whether entry of the proposed Final Judgment “is in the public interest.” 15 U.S.C. § 16(e)(1). In making that determination, the court, in accordance with the statute as amended in 2004,² is required to consider:

(A) the competitive impact of such judgment, including termination of alleged violations, provisions for enforcement and modification, duration of relief sought, anticipated effects of alternative remedies actually considered, whether its terms are ambiguous, and any other competitive considerations bearing upon the adequacy of such judgment that the court deems necessary to a determination of whether the consent judgment is in the public interest; and

(B) the impact of entry of such judgment upon competition in the relevant market or markets, upon the public generally and individuals alleging specific injury from the violations set forth in the complaint including consideration of the public benefit, if any, to be derived from a determination of the issues at trial.

15 U.S.C. § 16(e)(1)(A)-(B). In considering these statutory factors, the court’s inquiry is necessarily a limited one as the government is entitled to “broad discretion to settle with the defendant within the reaches of the public interest.” *United States v. Microsoft Corp.*, 56 F.3d 1448, 1461 (D.C. Cir. 1995); *see generally United States v. SBC Commc’ns, Inc.*, 489 F. Supp. 2d 1 (D.D.C. 2007) (assessing public interest standard under the Tunney Act).

As the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit has held, under the APPA a court considers, among other things, the relationship between the remedy

² The 2004 amendments substituted “shall” for “may” in directing relevant factors for court to consider and amended list of factors to focus on competitive considerations and to address potentially ambiguous judgment terms. *Compare* 15 U.S.C. § 16(e) (2004), *with* 15 U.S.C. § 16(e)(1) (2006); *see also United States v. SBC Commc’ns, Inc.*, 489 F. Supp. 2d 1, 11 (D.D.C. 2007) (concluding that the 2004 amendments “effected minimal changes” to Tunney Act review).

secured and the specific allegations set forth in the government's complaint, whether the decree is sufficiently clear, whether enforcement mechanisms are sufficient, and whether the decree may positively harm third parties. *See Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1458-62. With respect to the adequacy of the relief secured by the decree, a court may not "engage in an unrestricted evaluation of what relief would best serve the public." *United States v. BNS, Inc.*, 858 F.2d 456, 462 (9th Cir. 1988) (citing *United States v. Bechtel Corp.*, 648 F.2d 660, 666 (9th Cir. 1981)); *see also Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1460-62. Courts have held that:

[t]he balancing of competing social and political interests affected by a proposed antitrust consent decree must be left, in the first instance, to the discretion of the Attorney General. The court's role in protecting the public interest is one of insuring that the government has not breached its duty to the public in consenting to the decree. The court is required to determine not whether a particular decree is the one that will best serve society, but whether the settlement is "*within the reaches of the public interest*." More elaborate requirements might undermine the effectiveness of antitrust enforcement by consent decree.

Bechtel, 648 F.2d at 666 (emphasis added) (citations omitted).³ In making its public interest determination, a district court "must accord deference to the government's predictions about the efficacy of its remedies, and may not require that the remedies perfectly match the alleged violations because this may only reflect underlying weakness in the government's case or concessions made during negotiation." *SBC Commc'ns*, 489 F. Supp. 2d at 17; *see also Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1461 (noting need for courts to be "deferential to the government's predictions as to the effect of the proposed remedies"); *United States v. Archer-Daniels-Midland*

³ *Cf. BNS*, 858 F.2d at 464 (holding that the court's "ultimate authority under the [APPA] is limited to approving or disapproving the consent decree"); *United States v. Gillette Co.*, 406 F. Supp. 713, 716 (D. Mass. 1975) (noting that, in this way, the court is constrained to "look at the overall picture not hypercritically, nor with a microscope, but with an artist's reducing glass"), *aff'd sub nom. Maryland v. United States*, 460 U.S. 1001 (1983). *See generally Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1461 (discussing whether "the remedies [obtained in the decree are] so inconsonant with the allegations charged as to fall outside of the 'reaches of the public interest'").

Co., 272 F. Supp. 2d 1, 6 (D.D.C. 2003) (noting that the court should grant due respect to the United States' prediction as to the effect of proposed remedies, its perception of the market structure, and its views of the nature of the case).

Courts have greater flexibility in approving proposed consent decrees than in crafting their own decrees following a finding of liability in a litigated matter. “[A] proposed decree must be approved even if it falls short of the remedy the court would impose on its own, as long as it falls within the range of acceptability or is ‘within the reaches of public interest.’” *United States v. AT&T Co.*, 552 F. Supp. 131, 151 (D.D.C. 1982) (citations omitted) (quoting *Gillette*, 406 F. Supp. at 716); *see also United States v. Alcan Aluminum Ltd.*, 605 F. Supp. 619, 622 (W.D. Ky. 1985) (approving the consent decree even though the court would have imposed a greater remedy). To meet this standard, the United States “need only provide a factual basis for concluding that the settlements are reasonably adequate remedies for the alleged harms.” *SBC Commc’ns*, 489 F. Supp. 2d at 17.

Moreover, the Court’s role under the APPA is limited to reviewing the remedy in relationship to the violations that the United States has alleged in its Complaint, and does not authorize the Court to “construct [its] own hypothetical case and then evaluate the decree against that case.” *Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1459. Because the “court’s authority to review the decree depends entirely on the government’s exercising its prosecutorial discretion by bringing a case in the first place,” it follows that “the court is only authorized to review the decree itself,” and not to “effectively redraft the complaint” to inquire into other matters that the United States did not pursue. *Id.* at 1459-60. As this Court recently confirmed in *SBC Communications*, courts “cannot look beyond the complaint in making the public interest determination unless the complaint is drafted so narrowly as to make a mockery of judicial power.” 489 F. Supp. 2d at 15.

In its 2004 amendments, Congress made clear its intent to preserve the practical benefits of utilizing consent decrees in antitrust enforcement, adding the unambiguous instruction “[n]othing in this section shall be construed to require the court to conduct an evidentiary hearing or to require the court to permit anyone to intervene.” 15 U.S.C. § 16(e)(2). This instruction explicitly writes into the statute the standard intended by the Congress that enacted the Tunney Act in 1974 , as Senator Tunney then explained: “[t]he court is nowhere compelled to go to trial or to engage in extended proceedings which might have the effect of vitiating the benefits of prompt and less costly settlement through the consent decree process.” 119 Cong. Rec. 24,598 (1973) (statement of Senator Tunney). Rather, the procedure for the public interest determination is left to the discretion of the court, with the recognition that the scope of the court’s “review remains sharply proscribed by precedent and the nature of Tunney Act proceedings.” *SBC Commc’ns*, 489 F. Supp. 2d at 11.⁴

IV. Conclusion

For the reasons set forth in this Motion and Memorandum and in the CIS, the Court should find that the proposed Final Judgment is in the public interest and should enter the Final Judgment without further hearings. The United States respectfully requests that the Final Judgment annexed hereto be entered as soon as possible.

⁴ See *United States v. Enova Corp.*, 107 F. Supp. 2d 10, 17 (D.D.C. 2000) (noting that the “Tunney Act expressly allows the court to make its public interest determination on the basis of the competitive impact statement and response to comments alone”); S. Rep. No. 93-298, 93d Cong., 1st Sess., at 6 (1973) (“Where the public interest can be meaningfully evaluated simply on the basis of briefs and oral arguments, that is the approach that should be utilized.”); *United States v. Mid-Am. Dairymen, Inc.*, 1977-1 Trade Cas. (CCH) 61,508, at 71,980 (W.D. Mo. 1977) (“[T]he Court, in making its public interest finding, should . . . carefully consider the explanations of the government in order to determine whether those explanations are reasonable under the circumstances.”).

Dated: May 22, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leslie D. Peritz", is written over a horizontal line.

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