



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2014
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV

AT
(202) 514-2007
TTY (866) 544-5309

FORMER DENSO CORP. EXECUTIVE AGREES TO PLEAD GUILTY TO OBSTRUCTING AUTOMOTIVE PARTS INVESTIGATION

Executive Agrees to Serve One Year in a U.S. Prison

WASHINGTON – A former executive of Japan-based Denso Corp. has agreed to plead guilty to obstruction of justice charges in connection with the Antitrust Division’s investigation into a conspiracy to fix the prices of heater control panels installed in cars sold in the United States and elsewhere, the Department of Justice announced today. The executive has also agreed to serve one year and one day in a U.S. prison.

A one-count felony charge was filed today in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan in Detroit against Kazuaki Fujitani, a former director of Denso Corp. in Japan. According to the charge, Fujitani, who was general manager of the Toyota Sales Division at the time of the offense, deleted numerous e-mails and electronic documents in February and March 2010 upon learning that the FBI had executed a search warrant on Denso’s U.S. subsidiary. The deleted documents contained communications between Denso and one or more of its competitors regarding requests for price quotation made by Toyota for heater control panels for the Toyota Avalon. The plea agreement is subject to court approval.

“Today’s charge demonstrates the Antitrust Division’s commitment to protecting the integrity of grand jury investigations,” said Brent Snyder, Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the Antitrust Division’s criminal enforcement program. “The division will vigorously prosecute individuals who destroy evidence in an attempt to conceal their participation in illegal conspiracies.”

In March 2012, Denso pleaded guilty and was sentenced to pay a \$78 million criminal fine for its role in conspiracies to fix the prices of heater control panels and electronic control units.

Including Fujitani, 29 individuals have been charged in the department’s ongoing investigation into price fixing and bid rigging in the auto parts industry. Additionally, 26 companies have pleaded guilty or agreed to plead guilty and have agreed to pay a total of over \$2.25 billion in fines.

Fujitani is charged with obstruction of justice, which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a criminal fine of \$250,000 for individuals.

Today's charge arose from an ongoing federal antitrust investigation into price fixing, bid rigging and other anticompetitive conduct in the automotive parts industry, which is being conducted by each of the Antitrust Division's criminal enforcement sections and the FBI. Today's charge was brought by the National Criminal Enforcement Section and the San Francisco Office of the Antitrust Division, with the assistance of the Detroit Field Office of the FBI. Anyone with information on price fixing, bid rigging and other anticompetitive conduct related to other products in the automotive parts industry should contact the Antitrust Division's Citizen Complaint Center at 1-888-647-3258, visit www.justice.gov/atr/contact/newcase.html, or call the Detroit Field Office of the FBI at 313-965-2323.

###

14-177