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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BEFORE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS:

Robert Pitofsky, Chairman
Mary L. Azcuenaga
Sheila F. Anthony
Mozelle W. Thompson
Orson Swindle

In the Matter of

STONE CONTAINER CORPORATION, a corporation.

DOCKET NO. C-3806

DECISION AND ORDER

The Federal Trade Commission ("the Commission") having initiated an investigation of certain acts and practices of the respondent named in the caption hereof, and the respondent having been furnished thereafter with a copy of a draft of complaint which the Bureau of Competition proposed to present to the Commission for its consideration and which, if issued by the Commission, would charge the respondent with violation of the Federal Trade Commission Act; and

The respondent, its attorneys, and counsel for the Commission having thereafter executed an agreement containing a consent order, an admission by respondent of all the jurisdictional facts set forth in the aforesaid draft of complaint, a statement that the signing of said agreement is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by respondent that the law has been violated as alleged in such complaint, and waivers and other provisions as required by the Commission's rules; and

The Commission having thereafter considered the matter and having determined that it has reason to believe that the respondent has violated the said Act, and that a complaint should issue stating its charges in that respect, and having thereupon accepted the executed consent agreement and placed such agreement on the public record for sixty (60) days, now in further conformity with the procedure described in § 2.34 of its Rules, the Commission hereby issues its complaint, makes the following jurisdictional findings and enters the following order:

1. Respondent Stone Container Corporation is a corporation organized, existing and doing business under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Delaware, with its office and principal place of business located at 150 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60601.
2. The Federal Trade Commission has jurisdiction of the subject matter of the proceeding and of the respondent, and the proceeding is in the public interest.

ORDER

I.

For purposes of this order, the following definitions shall apply:

A. "Respondent" means Stone Container Corporation, its directors, officers, employees, agents and representatives, predecessors, successors and assigns, and its subsidiaries, divisions, groups, and affiliates controlled, directly or indirectly, by Stone Container Corporation, and the respective directors, officers, employees, agents and representatives, successors and assigns of each.

B. "Linerboard" means any grade of paperboard suitable for use in the production of corrugated containers, but excludes corrugating medium.

C. "Commission" means the Federal Trade Commission.

II.

IT IS ORDERED that respondent, directly or indirectly, through any corporation, subsidiary, division, employee, agent or other device, forthwith cease and desist from:

A. Requesting, suggesting, urging, or advocating that any manufacturer or seller of linerboard raise, fix, or stabilize prices or price levels, or engage in any other pricing action with regard to sales of linerboard to third parties.

B. Entering into, attempting to enter into, adhering to, or maintaining any combination, conspiracy, agreement, understanding, plan or program with any manufacturer or seller of linerboard to fix, raise, establish, maintain or stabilize prices or price levels, or engage in any other pricing action with regard to sales of linerboard to third parties.

PROVIDED, that the following conduct by respondent as and when conducted in the ordinary course of business shall not, of itself, constitute a violation of Paragraph II of this order:

(1) agreeing to purchase linerboard from, or sell linerboard to, a competitor; (2) negotiating or agreeing upon the price at which linerboard will be sold to a competitor; (3) negotiating or agreeing upon the price at which linerboard will be purchased from a competitor; and (4) discussing the financial condition of Stone Container Corporation, or the condition of or the prospects for the market for linerboard, with persons who are not competitors, such as non-integrated customers, investors, shareholders, securities analysts, and news and financial reporters.

III.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent shall:

A. Within thirty (30) days after the date on which this order becomes final, mail by first class mail a copy of this order, to all of its directors and officers, and to all of its management employees with responsibility for the manufacture, purchase and/or sale of linerboard (hereinafter referred to as "Management Employees") ;

B. For a period of three (3) years after the date on which this order becomes final, mail by first class mail a copy of this order to each person who becomes a director, officer, or Management Employee, within thirty (30) days of the commencement of such person's employment or affiliation with respondent; and

C. For a period of three (3) years after the date on which this order becomes final, require each of its directors, officers, and Management Employees to sign and submit to respondent within thirty (30) days of the receipt thereof a statement that: (1) acknowledges receipt of the order; (2) represents that the undersigned has read and understands the order; and (3) acknowledges that the undersigned has been advised and understands that non-compliance with the order may subject Stone Container Corporation to penalties for violation of the order.

IV.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent shall:

A. Within sixty (60) days from the date on which this order becomes final, and annually thereafter for five (5) years on the anniversary date of this order, and at such other times as the Commission may by written notice to the respondent require, file with the Commission a verified written report setting forth in detail the manner and form in which respondent has complied and is complying with this order;

B. For a period of five (5) years after the order becomes final, maintain and make available to the staff of the Federal Trade Commission for inspection and copying, upon reasonable notice, all records of communications with any manufacturer or seller of linerboard relating to mill downtime, rates or levels of production, the purchase or sale of linerboard, or any aspect of pricing for linerboard; and

C. Notify the Commission at least thirty (30) days prior to any proposed changes in Stone Container Corporation such as dissolution, assignment, or sale resulting in the emergence of a successor corporation, the creation or dissolution of subsidiaries, or any other change in the corporation that may affect compliance obligations arising out of the order.

V.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this order shall terminate on May 18, 2018.

By the Commission, Commissioner Swindle dissenting.

Donald S. Clark
Secretary

SEAL:

ISSUED: May 18, 1998