

Settlements in Landmark Auto Parts Litigation Surpass \$1 Billion

03.01.2018 | 10 | 21NEWS

Class Members' Recovery to date in Massive Global Price-Fixing Conspiracies Yields one of the Largest Indirect Purchaser Recoveries in U.S. History

Attorneys representing U.S. consumers and businesses in history-making litigation arising out of price-fixing and bid rigging conspiracies among automotive parts manufacturers announced today that settlements have now surpassed \$1 billion. The cumulative settlement figure in the case now stands as one of the largest amounts that indirect purchaser "end payors"—the ultimate purchasers of a price-fixed product—have ever recovered in a U.S. antitrust lawsuit.

The massive litigation, coordinated as *In re Automotive Parts Antitrust Litigation* in federal court in Michigan, has been pending since 2011.

These civil antitrust actions grew out of a global criminal antitrust investigation, which exposed long-running agreements among automotive parts manufacturers to rig bids and fix the prices of their products. In the litigation, which encompasses 41 coordinated class actions against more than 160 defendants, end-payor consumers and businesses allege they purchased or leased new automobiles at prices that were artificially inflated as a result of the defendants' anticompetitive conduct. The most recent settlements, announced on February 22, 2018, call for Sanden to pay \$7,600,000 and Tenneco to pay \$17,480,000, respectively, to the end-payor class, pushing the classes' total recovery to more than \$1 billion. The litigation continues against the remaining non-settling defendants.

"Reaching this milestone is a testament to the many hours of hard work plaintiffs' counsel have dedicated to litigating what may be the most complicated group of antitrust class actions in U.S. history," said Hollis Salzman, co-lead counsel for the end-payor plaintiffs and partner and co-chair of the Antitrust and Trade Regulation practice at Robins Kaplan LLP. "We will continue to vigorously pursue our case against the remaining defendants to maximize the recovery for consumers and businesses who suffered significant economic harm as a result of defendants' unlawful conduct," she added.

Marc M. Seltzer, a partner in Susman Godfrey's Los Angeles office, and co-lead counsel for the end-payor plaintiffs added: "The settlements achieved to date represent a tremendous victory for the victims of the conspiracies, which were obtained after years of hard fought litigation. Our job, however, is not done, and we intend to continue to fight on behalf of our class members who were injured as a result of defendants' decades-long price-fixing conspiracies."

Adam J. Zapala, a Principal at Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy LLP and co-lead counsel for the end-payor plaintiffs added: "Each and every settlement we secure, including the latest ones with Sanden and Tenneco, bring us closer to securing truly historic relief for injured consumers and businesses."

SUSMAN GODFREY

Marc M. Seltzer of Susman Godfrey L.L.P., Hollis Salzman of Robins Kaplan LLP, , and Adam J. Zapala of Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy LLP, serve as co-lead counsel for the end-payor plaintiffs. Joining Seltzer from Susman Godfrey is Steven Sklaver, Chanler Langham, Terry Oxford, Floyd Short, Jenna Farleigh, and Lucas Issacharoff.