

Debbi Tinker  
Exit Realty Consultants

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US Department of Justice

RE: "Competition and the Real Estate Workshop" -- Comment, Project No. V050015

Dear Sirs:

The real estate industry is a model of competition that works. In an economy in which large, national corporations -- such as Wal-Mart and Microsoft -- dominate the marketplace, real estate stands apart. We are an industry made up predominantly of small businesses and independent contractors who represent the entrepreneurial spirit this country was founded on. Even through the economic downturns our country has experienced in the past few years, our industry has continued to provide opportunity -- something I would say is confirmed by the over 2 million Americans who are now licensed to provide professional real estate services in communities across the country.

All of us serve local markets where we compete for business every day. There is very fierce competition which is fueled by the uniquely intense and personalized nature of the service we provide to our clients -- which, in turn, determines our future success through referrals and return business.

Barriers to entry are low. I had to learn the business and pass the state licensing examination, but it is my own work ethic, commitment to professional standards and dedication to client satisfaction that determine my success. It is getting more difficult everyday to find new clients because everyone is now getting their license.

Nothing encourages a competitive business environment more than providing consumers with choice. In the residential real estate marketplace, consumers not only are able to choose from more than 76,000 brokerage firms and more than 1.2 million REALTORS®, but also from a variety of business models.

From my perspective, the new policy is a win-win for consumers and REALTORS®.

It works for consumers because it gives home sellers a choice whether to permit marketing of their property on the Internet and in selecting an MLS member with whom they want to work. It allows them to "opt-in" and have their property displayed on other brokers' Web sites even if they are working with a broker who does not participate in sharing his listings for display by his competitors. And it works for REALTORS® because it gives us the right to control where our listings are displayed on the Internet.

Respectfully,

Debbi Tinker  
REALTOR®