

Analysis of Proposed Consent Order to Aid Public Comment
In the Matter of New World Auto Imports, Inc., d/b/a Southwest Kia, et al., File No. 1323165

The Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”) has accepted, subject to final approval, an agreement containing a consent order from New World Auto Imports, Inc., d/b/a Southwest Kia, New World Auto Imports of Rockwall, Inc., d/b/a Southwest Kia, and Southwest Kia of Rockwall, and Hampton Two Auto Corporation, d/b/a Southwest Kia, Southwest Kia-NW, and Southwest Kia Mesquite. The proposed consent order has been placed on the public record for thirty (30) days for receipt of comments by interested persons. Comments received during this period will become part of the public record. After thirty (30) days, the FTC will again review the agreement and the comments received, and will decide whether it should withdraw from the agreement and take appropriate action or make final the agreement’s proposed order.

The respondents are motor vehicle dealers. According to the FTC complaint, respondents have advertised that consumers can finance the purchase of vehicles for the advertised terms, including the advertised monthly payment amount. The complaint alleges that, in fact, the monthly payment increases dramatically at the end of the transaction, because consumers owe a balloon payment of many thousand dollars. The complaint alleges, therefore, that respondents’ representations are false or misleading in violation of Section 5 of the FTC Act. The complaint also alleges that respondents have advertised that consumers can pay \$27 at lease inception to lease the advertised vehicles for the advertised monthly payment amount. The complaint alleges that, in fact, consumers must also pay fees, including but not limited to an acquisition fee, which is \$595, and the first month’s payment, for a total of at least \$700 for each vehicle. The complaint alleges, therefore, that respondents’ representations are false or misleading in violation of Section 5 of the FTC Act. In addition, the complaint alleges a violation of the Truth in Lending Act (“TILA”) and Regulation Z for failing to disclose clearly and conspicuously certain costs and terms when advertising credit. The complaint also alleges a violation of the Consumer Leasing Act (“CLA”) and Regulation M for failing to clearly and conspicuously disclose the costs and terms when advertising leases.

The proposed order is designed to prevent the respondents from engaging in similar deceptive practices in the future. Part I.A prohibits the respondents from misrepresenting the cost of: (1) purchasing a vehicle with financing, including but not necessarily limited to the amount or percentage of the downpayment, the number of payments or period of repayment, the amount of any payment, and the repayment obligation over the full term of the loan, including any balloon payment; or (2) leasing a vehicle, including but not limited to the total amount due at lease inception, the downpayment, amount down, acquisition fee, capitalized cost reduction, any other amount required to be paid at lease inception, and the amounts of all monthly or other periodic payments. Part I.B prohibits the respondents from misrepresenting any other material fact about the price, sale, financing, or leasing of any vehicle.

Part II of the proposed order addresses the TILA allegation. It requires that the respondents clearly and conspicuously make all of the disclosures required by TILA and Regulation Z if they state the amount or percentage of any downpayment, the number of payments or period of repayment, the amount of any payment, or the amount of any finance charge. In addition, Part II prohibits the respondents from stating a rate of finance charge

without stating the rate as an “annual percentage rate” or the abbreviation “APR,” using that term. Part II also prohibits any other violation of TILA and Regulation Z.

Part III of the proposed order addresses the CLA allegation. It requires that the respondents clearly and conspicuously make all of the disclosures required by CLA and Regulation M if they state relevant trigger terms, including the monthly lease payment or the amount of any payment or that any or no initial payment is required at lease inception.

Part IV of the proposed order requires respondents to keep copies of relevant advertisements and materials substantiating claims made in the advertisements. Part V requires that respondents provide copies of the order to certain of their personnel. Part VI requires notification to the Commission regarding changes in corporate structure that might affect compliance obligations under the order. Part VII requires the respondents to file compliance reports with the Commission. Finally, Part VIII is a provision “sunsetting” the order after twenty (20) years, with certain exceptions.

The purpose of this analysis is to aid public comment on the proposed order. It is not intended to constitute an official interpretation of the complaint or proposed order, or to modify in any way the proposed order’s terms.