

Analysis of Proposed Consent Order to Aid Public Comment

In the Matter of Gennex Media LLC, a limited liability company, also d/b/a Brandnex, BrandStrong, PMGOA, and Promotional Group of America, and Akil Kurji, individually and as an officer of Gennex Media LLC, File No. 2023122

The Federal Trade Commission (“FTC” or “Commission”) has accepted, subject to final approval, an agreement containing a consent order from Gennex Media LLC and Akil Kurji (“Respondents”).

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 Commission will again review the agreement and the comments received, and will decide whether it should withdraw from the agreement or make final the agreement’s proposed order.

This matter involves Respondents’ use of “Made in USA” claims to advertise and sell customizable promotional products to consumers. According to the FTC’s complaint, Respondents represented that the customizable promotional products they offer are all or virtually all made in the United States. In fact, in numerous instances, Respondents’ customizable promotional products are wholly imported from China. Indeed, in some instances the products ship directly to consumers from China without passing through Respondents’ U.S. facility. According to the complaint, Kurji, Gennex’s sole officer and shareholder, formulated or approved marketing materials with U.S.-origin claims despite knowing numerous products advertised are imported. Based on the foregoing, the complaint alleges that Respondents engaged in deceptive acts or practices in violation of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act.

The proposed consent order contains provisions designed to prevent Respondents from engaging in similar acts and practices in the future. Consistent with the FTC’s Enforcement Policy Statement on U.S. Origin Claims, Part I prohibits Respondents from making U.S.-origin claims for their products unless either: (1) the final assembly or processing of the product occurs in the United States, all significant processing that goes into the product occurs in the United States, and all or virtually all ingredients or components of the product are made and sourced in the United States; (2) a clear and conspicuous qualification appears immediately adjacent to the representation that accurately conveys the extent to which the product contains foreign parts, ingredients or components, and/or processing; or (3) for a claim that a product is assembled in the United States, the product is last substantially transformed in the United States, the product’s principal assembly takes place in the United States, and United States assembly operations are substantial.

Part II prohibits Respondents from making any country-of-origin claim about a product or service unless the claim is true, not misleading, and Respondents have a reasonable basis substantiating the representation.

Parts III through V are monetary provisions. Part III imposes a judgment of \$146,249.24. Part IV includes additional monetary provisions relating to collections. Part V requires

Respondents to provide sufficient customer information to enable the Commission to administer consumer redress, if appropriate.

Parts VI through IX are reporting and compliance provisions. Part VI requires Respondents to acknowledge receipt of the order, to provide a copy of the order to certain current and future principals, officers, directors, and employees, and to obtain an acknowledgement from each such person that they have received a copy of the order. Part VII requires Respondents to file a compliance report within one year after the order becomes final and to notify the Commission within 14 days of certain changes that would affect compliance with the order. Part VIII requires Respondents to maintain certain records, including records necessary to demonstrate compliance with the order. Part IX requires Respondents to submit additional compliance reports when requested by the Commission and to permit the Commission or its representatives to interview Respondents' personnel.

Finally, Part X is a "sunset" provision terminating 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 proposed order or to modify its terms in any way.