

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BEFORE THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES**

**In the Matter of**

**The Kroger Company**

**and**

**Albertsons Companies, Inc.**

**Docket No. 9428**

**COMPLAINT COUNSEL’S MOTION TO REQUIRE  
RESPONDENTS TO COMPLY WITH FTC RULE 3.31A(b) AND  
IDENTIFY NO MORE THAN FIVE EXPERT WITNESSES**

Respondents’ expert witness list violates the FTC Rule limiting the number of experts that may be called at the evidentiary hearing. FTC Rule 3.31A(b) provides that “[e]ach side will be limited to calling at the evidentiary hearing 5 expert witnesses, including any rebuttal or surrebuttal expert witnesses.” 16 C.F.R. § 331A(b). “A party may file a motion seeking leave to call additional expert witnesses due to extraordinary circumstances.” *Id.* The Court’s Scheduling Order reaffirmed, “The parties are to comply with Rule 3.31A.” Scheduling Order ¶ 21. On May 10, 2024, Respondents served their expert witness list, which identified six experts. Respondents did not move for leave to exceed the five-expert limit. Complaint Counsel respectfully moves for an order requiring Respondents to comply with Rule 3.31A(b) and amend their expert witness list to identify only five experts.

**BACKGROUND**

On May 3, 2024, Complaint Counsel served its expert witness list, which identified three experts whom the FTC may call at the evidentiary hearing of this matter. Ex. A at 1.

On May 10, 2024, Respondents served their expert witness list. Respondents’ expert

witness list identified six experts. Ex. B at 1. Respondents expressly “reserve[d] the right to call any of these experts or any other expert for rebuttal testimony.” Ex. B. at 1 (emphasis added). At the same time, Respondents served expert materials for their six experts, including thousands of pages of prior testimony and publications.

## ARGUMENT

Respondents’ identification of six expert witnesses whom they may call at trial violates Rule 3.31A(b)’s five-expert limit. Respondents failed to move for leave to exceed the limit based on “extraordinary circumstances” and take the position that they need not seek leave until an undefined deadline of their choosing.<sup>1</sup> Respondents’ violation of the Rules is unfairly prejudicing Complaint Counsel, who must waste time and resources reviewing extra materials and preparing to depose an expert whom Respondents are prohibited from calling at trial. Respondents should follow the Rules and identify the five witnesses they may call at the evidentiary hearing.

Rule 3.31A(b), 16 C.F.R. § 331A(b), states:

No party may call an expert witness at the hearing unless he or she has been listed and has provided reports as required by this section. Each side will be limited to calling at the evidentiary hearing 5 expert witnesses, including any rebuttal or surrebuttal expert witnesses. A party may file a motion seeking leave to call additional expert witnesses due to extraordinary circumstances.

While the five-expert limit in Rule 3.31A(b) “refers to the number of experts that may be called at trial . . . an expert must first be designated and provide an expert report, in order to be allowed to testify.” *In re Pom Wonderful LLC*, No. 9344, 2011 WL 734462, at \*2 n.2 (FTC Feb. 23, 2011). Rule 3.31A(b), therefore, “indirectly affects the number of experts that may be

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<sup>1</sup> Respondents should not be permitted to seek leave as part of any opposition to this motion. That would directly contravene the procedure set forth in Rule 3.31A(b). If Respondents are permitted to file a motion for leave, Complaint Counsel reserves its right to file an opposition to any such motion.

designated.” *Id.* This Court, accordingly, enforces Rule 3.31A(b) when parties serve expert witness lists with more than five experts. *See, e.g., In re 1-800 Contacts, Inc.*, No. 9372, 2017 WL 781384, at \*1 (FTC Feb. 17, 2017).

It is undisputed that Respondents’ expert witness list violates Rule 3.31A(b)’s five-expert limit. Respondents did not move for leave to exceed the limit. They also did not notify Complaint Counsel that they would be serving an expert witness list that violated the Rule.

After Complaint Counsel raised this issue with Respondents, Respondents responded that Rule 3.31A(b) applies only to limit how many witnesses may be called at the evidentiary hearing. *See* Ex. C (Email from L. Sullivan to C. Dickinson (May 13, 2024)). According to Respondents, “if Respondents decide to call six experts to testify at the evidentiary hearing, they will seek relief at the appropriate time consistent with Rule 3.31A(b).” *Id.* Respondents are incorrect. Rule 3.31A(b) “indirectly affects the number of experts that may be designated,” and this Court routinely requires parties to limit disclosures to five experts absent a motion to seek leave. *Pom Wonderful, supra*; *see 1-800 Contacts, supra*. Under Respondents’ reading of the Rule, a party may disclose an unlimited number of experts, impose all the attendant burdens (including depositions) of addressing those experts’ opinions, and then decide later which experts actually will come to trial.

Respondents’ violation of Rule 3.31A(b) is unfairly prejudicing Complaint Counsel, and their position that they need not move for leave until an undefined future deadline of their choosing compounds that prejudice. Respondents served thousands of pages of disclosures for the six experts they identified in violation of the Rules. Complaint Counsel must expend time and resources without knowing which experts may ultimately be called at trial. This includes reviewing expert disclosures, reviewing expert reports, and taking a deposition—all for an expert

who may not be called at trial. This Court should not countenance such dilatory tactics and waste.

### CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Court should order Respondents to serve an amended expert witness list that identifies no more than five experts.

Dated: May 16, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

By: s/ James H. Weingarten  
James H. Weingarten  
Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20580  
Telephone: (202) 326-3570  
Email: [jweingarten@ftc.gov](mailto:jweingarten@ftc.gov)

*Counsel Supporting the Complaint*

# Ex. A

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BEFORE THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES**

**In the Matter of**

**The Kroger Company**

and

**Albertsons Companies Inc.,**

**Respondents.**

**Docket No. 9428**

**COMPLAINT COUNSEL’S EXPERT WITNESS LIST**

Pursuant to the Court’s March 20, 2024, Scheduling Order, Complaint Counsel disclose expert witness names, subject matter, and other materials as required. *See* Scheduling Order at p. 1 & ¶ 21(a). Complaint Counsel reserve the right to modify this list. Complaint Counsel also reserve the right:

- A. To call any of these experts or any other expert for rebuttal testimony; and
- B. Not to call at the hearing any of these experts, as circumstances may warrant.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject Matter</b>
Edward Fox, Ph.D.	Marketing and retailing.
Nicholas Hill, Ph.D.	Antitrust economics and industrial organization.
Aaron Yeater	Financial and managerial accounting.

The disclosures required by Paragraph 21(a) of the Scheduling Order are being provided concurrently via Secure File Transfer Protocol.

Dated: May 3, 2024

By:

/s/ James H. Weingarten  
James H. Weingarten  
Federal Trade Commission  
Bureau of Competition  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20580  
Telephone: (202) 326-3570  
jweingarten@ftc.gov

*Counsel Supporting the Complaint*

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on May 3, 2024, I caused the foregoing document and disclosures to be served via email and Secure File Transfer Protocol to:

Michael B. Bernstein  
Matthew Wolf  
Sonia Pfaffenroth  
Joshua Davis  
Michael Kientzle  
Jason Ewart  
Yasmine Harik  
Christina Cleveland  
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP  
601 Massachusetts Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
Telephone: (202) 942-5227  
Email: michael.b.bernstein@arnoldporter.com  
Email: matthew.wolf@arnoldporter.com  
Email: sonia.pfaffenroth@arnoldporter.com  
Email: joshua.davis@arnoldporter.com  
Email: michael.kientzle@arnoldporter.com  
Email: jason.ewart@arnoldporter.com  
Email: yasmine.harik@arnoldporter.com  
Email: christina.cleveland@arnoldporter.com

John Holler  
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP  
250 West 55<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10019  
Telephone: (212) 836-7739  
Email: john.holler@arnoldporter.com

Mark Perry  
Luke Sullivan  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
2001 M Street, NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20036  
Telephone: (202) 682-7511  
Email: mark.perry@weil.com  
Email: luke.sullivan@weil.com

Luna Barrington  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP

Edward Hassi  
Debevoise & Plimpton LLP  
801 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
Telephone: (202) 383-8135  
Email: thassi@debevoise.com

Michael Schaper  
Shannon R. Selden  
J. Robert Abraham  
Natascha Born  
Jaime Freilich-Fried  
Marieugenia Cardenas  
Tom E. Buckley  
Heather T. Mehler  
Marie Ventimiglia  
Debevoise & Plimpton LLP  
66 Hudson Boulevard  
New York, NY 10001  
Telephone: (212) 909-6737  
Email: mschaper@debevoise.com  
Email: srselden@debevoise.com  
Email: jrabraham@debevoise.com  
Email: nborn@debevoise.com  
Email: jmfried@debevoise.com  
Email: mcardena@debevoise.com  
Email: tebuckley@debevoise.com  
Email: htmehler@debevoise.com  
Email: msventim@debevoise.com

Mike Cowie  
James Fishkin  
Dechert LLP  
1900 K Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
Telephone: (202) 261-3339  
Email: mike.cowie@dechert.com  
Email: james.fishkin@dechert.com

Thomas Miller



767 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10153  
Telephone: (212) 310-8421  
Email: luna.barrington@weil.com

Bambo Obaro  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
201 Redwood Shores Parkway  
Redwood Shores, CA 94065  
Telephone: (650) 802-3083  
Email: bambo.obaro@weil.com  
*Counsel for The Kroger Company*

Dechert LLP  
Cira Centre  
2929 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
Telephone: (215) 994-2906  
Email: thomas.miller@dechert.com

George L. Paul  
White & Case LLP  
701 13th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
Telephone: (202) 626-3656  
Email: gpaul@whitecase.com

*Counsel for Albertsons Companies, Inc.*

s/ James H. Weingarten  
James H. Weingarten  
Federal Trade Commission  
Bureau of Competition  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20580  
Telephone: (202) 326-3570  
Email: jweingarten@ftc.gov

*Counsel Supporting the Complaint*

# Ex. B

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES**

<p><b>In the Matter of</b></p> <p><b>The Kroger Company</b></p> <p><b>and</b></p> <p><b>Albertsons Companies, Inc.</b></p>
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Docket No. 9428

**RESPONDENTS’ EXPERT WITNESS LIST**

Pursuant to the Court’s March 20, 2024 Scheduling Order, Respondents The Kroger Company (“Kroger”) and Albertsons Companies, Inc. (“Albertsons”), by and through their undersigned counsel, provide this list of expert witness names, subject matter, and other materials as required. *See* Scheduling Order at p. 1 & ¶ 21(a). Respondents reserve the right to modify this list. Respondents also reserve the right to call any of these experts or any other expert for rebuttal testimony; and not to call at the hearing any of these experts, as circumstances may warrant.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject Matter</b>
Mark Israel	Antitrust economics
Rajiv Gokhale	Efficiencies of the proposed transaction
Dan Galante	Divestiture analysis
Justin McCrary	Labor economics
Roger King	Labor relations
Herbert J. Kleinberger	Retail grocery industry

The disclosures required by Paragraph 21(a) of the Scheduling Order are being provided concurrently.

DATED May 10, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

By: /s/ Sonia K. Pfaffenroth

Sonia K. Pfaffenroth  
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP  
601 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
Telephone: 202 942 6831  
Sonia.Pfaffenroth@arnoldporter.com

/s/ Luna Barrington

Luna Barrington  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
767 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10053  
Telephone: 212 310 8421  
Luna.Barrington@weil.com

/s/ Enu Mainigi

Enu Mainigi  
Jonathan Pitt  
A. Joshua Podoll  
Williams & Connolly LLP  
680 Maine Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20024  
Telephone: 202 434 5000  
emainigi@wc.com  
jpitt@wc.com  
apodoll@wc.com

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that on May 10, 2024, that I caused the foregoing documents to be served via email to:

Charles Dickinson  
James H. Weingarten  
Emily Blackburn  
Paul Frangie  
Laura Hall  
Janet Kim  
Kenneth A. Libby  
Eric Olson  
Rohan Pai  
Harris Rothman  
Albert Teng  
Elizabeth Arens  
Jacob Hamburger  
Joshua Smith  
Katherine Bies  
Katherine Drummonds  
Lily Hough  
Alexander Bryson  
Theodore Zang, Jr.  
Guia Dixon  
Anjelica Sarmiento  
Le'Ora Tyree  
Trisha Grant  
Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20580  
Telephone: 202 326 2617  
cdickinson@ftc.gov  
jweingarten@ftc.gov  
ebackburn@ftc.gov  
pfrangie@ftc.gov  
lhall1@ftc.gov  
jkim3@ftc.gov  
klibby@ftc.gov  
eolson@ftc.gov  
rpai@ftc.gov  
hrothman@ftc.gov  
ateng@ftc.gov  
earens@ftc.gov  
jhamburger1@ftc.gov  
jsmith3@ftc.gov  
kbies@ftc.gov

Matthew M. Wolf  
Michael B. Bernstein  
Jason C. Ewart  
Joshua M. Davis  
Matthew M. Shultz  
Yasmine Harik  
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP  
601 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
Telephone: 202 942 5000  
matthew.wolf@arnoldporter.com  
michael.b.bernstein@arnoldporter.com  
jason.ewart@arnoldporter.com  
joshua.davis@arnoldporter.com  
matthew.shultz@arnoldporter.com  
yasmine.harik@arnoldporter.com

John Holler  
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP  
250 W. 55th St.  
New York, NY 10019  
Telephone: 212 836 7739  
john.holler@arnoldporter.com

Lisa Madalone Pieters  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
767 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10053  
Telephone: (212) 310-8000  
Lisa.Pieters@weil.com

Bambo Obaro  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
201 Redwood Shores Parkway  
Redwood Shoes, CA 94065  
Telephone: (650) 802-3000  
Bambo.Obaro@weil.com

Sarah Sternlieb  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
700 Louisiana St., Suite 3200  
Houston, TX 77002  
Telephone: (713) 546-5000  
Sarah.Sternlieb@weil.com

kdrummonds@ftc.gov  
lthough@ftc.gov  
abryson@ftc.gov  
tzang@ftc.gov  
gdixon@ftc.gov  
asarmiento@ftc.gov  
ltyree@ftc.gov  
tgrant1@ftc.gov

*Complaint Counsel*

Edward D. Hassi  
Debevoise & Plimpton LLP  
801 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington D.C. 20004  
Telephone: 202 383 8203  
thassi@debevoise.com

Michael Schaper  
Shannon Rose Selden  
J. Robert Abraham  
Natascha Born  
Marieugenia Cardenas  
Jaime Freilich-Fried  
Debevoise & Plimpton LLP  
66 Hudson Boulevard  
New York, NY 10001  
Telephone: 212 909 6000  
mschaper@debevoise.com  
srselden@debevoise.com  
jrabraham@debevoise.com  
nborn@debevoise.com  
mcardena@debevoise.com  
jmfried@debevoise.com

James A. Fishkin  
Michael G. Cowie  
Elena Kamenir  
Dechert LLP  
1900 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
Telephone: 202 261 3300  
james.fishkin@dechert.com  
mike.cowie@dechert.com  
elena.kamenir@dechert.com

Mark A. Perry  
Jason Kleinwaks  
Luke Sullivan  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
2001 M Street NW Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Telephone: (202) 682-7000  
Mark.Perry@weil.com  
Jason.Kleinwaks@weil.com  
Luke.Sullivan@weil.com

*Co-Counsel for Respondent The Kroger Company*

Howard Ullman  
Dechert LLP  
45 Fremont Street, 26th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Telephone: 415 262 4557  
howard.ullman@dechert.com

Ross E. Ufberg  
Yosef Weitzmann  
Dechert LLP  
2929 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
Telephone: 215 994 2422  
ross.ufberg@dechert.com  
yosi.weitzman@dechert.com

George L. Paul  
White & Case LLP  
701 13th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Telephone: 202 626 3656  
gpaul@whitecase.com

*Co-Counsel for Respondent Albertsons  
Companies, Inc.*

By: /s/ Sonia K. Pfaffenroth  
Sonia K. Pfaffenroth  
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP  
601 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
Telephone: 202 942 6831

/s/ Luna Barrington  
Luna Barrington  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
767 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10053  
Telephone: 212 310 8421

*Counsel for Respondent The Kroger  
Company*

# Ex. C



**From:** Sullivan, Luke  
**To:** Dickinson, Charles; kyle.angelotti@arnoldporter.com; matthew.wolf@arnoldporter.com; michael.b.bernstein@arnoldporter.com; jason.ewart@arnoldporter.com; matthew.shultz@arnoldporter.com; Yasmine Harik -contact; joshua.davis@arnoldporter.com; sonia.pfaffenroth@arnoldporter.com; john.holler@arnoldporter.com; jmfried@debevoise.com; Kleinwaks, Jason; Teng, Albert; Kim, Janet; Smith, Joshua; nborn@debevoise.com; Bies, Katherine; Arens, Elizabeth; thassi@debevoise.com; Hough, Lily; Olson, Eric; mcardena@debevoise.com; srselden@debevoise.com; Libby, Kenneth A.; Rothman, Harris; james.fishkin@dechert.com; Drummonds, Katherine; Pai, Rohan; gpaul@whitecase.com; Weingarten, James; Frankie, Paul; mschaper@debevoise.com; Hamburger, Jacob; Blackburn, Emily; jrabraham@debevoise.com; mike.cowie@dechert.com; Hall, Laura; Perry, Mark; Pieters, Lisa; Sternlieb, Sarah; Obaro, Bambo; jpitt@wc.com; emainigi@wc.com; apodoll@wc.com; ross.ufberg@dechert.com; yosi.weitzman@dechert.com; Tyree, Leo; Dixon, Guia; Barrington, Luna; elena.kamenir@dechert.com; Grant, Trisha; Sarmiento, Anjelica; Bryson, Alexander James; howard.ullman@dechert.com; Zang, Theodore; Anderson, Barrett  
**Subject:** RE: Kroger/Albertsons, FTC Docket No. 9428 - Respondents' Expert Witness List  
**Date:** Monday, May 13, 2024 9:17:15 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg

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Counsel –

Thank you for your message. You contend that the disclosure of six expert witnesses violates 16 C.F.R. 3.31A(b). But as your email acknowledges, that rule clearly and unambiguously limits only the number of expert witnesses that may be “call[ed] at the evidentiary hearing.” See 16 C.F.R. 3.31A(b) (“Each side will be **limited to calling at the evidentiary hearing 5 expert witnesses.**”) (emphasis added).

Judge Chappell has recognized that FTC Rule 3.31A(b) does not prohibit the disclosure of more than five experts. In *In re Pom Wonderful, LLC & Roll Int’l Corp.*, Judge Chappell rejected the argument that it was procedurally improper to designate “eight expert witnesses on Respondents’ expert witness list without first obtaining leave pursuant to Rule 3.31A(b).” Dkt. 9344, at 4 n.4 (FTC 2011). Judge Chappell did so because “there is nothing in the language of Rule 3.31A(b) requiring leave in advance of designating experts.” *Id.*

If Respondents decide to call six experts to testify at the evidentiary hearing, they will seek relief at the appropriate time consistent with FTC Rule 3.31A(b). But Respondents’ expert designations are fully consistent with the FTC Rules at this stage.

Best,  
Luke



**Luke Sullivan**

Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
2001 M Street NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20036  
[Luke.Sullivan@weil.com](mailto:Luke.Sullivan@weil.com)  
+1 202 682 7006 Direct  
+1 202 857 0940 Fax

---

**From:** Dickinson, Charles <cdickinson@ftc.gov>

**Sent:** Monday, May 13, 2024 10:00 AM

**To:** kyle.angelotti@arnoldporter.com; matthew.wolf@arnoldporter.com; michael.b.bernstein@arnoldporter.com; jason.ewart@arnoldporter.com; matthew.shultz@arnoldporter.com; yasmine.harik@arnoldporter.com; joshua.davis@arnoldporter.com; sonia.pfaffenroth@arnoldporter.com; john.holler@arnoldporter.com; jmfried@debevoise.com; Sullivan, Luke <Luke.Sullivan@weil.com>; Kleinwaks, Jason <Jason.Kleinwaks@weil.com>; Teng, Albert <ateng@ftc.gov>; Kim, Janet <jkim3@ftc.gov>; Smith, Joshua <jsmith3@ftc.gov>; nborn@debevoise.com; Bies, Katherine <kbies@ftc.gov>; Arens, Elizabeth <earens@ftc.gov>; thassi@debevoise.com; Hough, Lily <lough@ftc.gov>; Olson, Eric <eolson@ftc.gov>; mcardena@debevoise.com; srselden@debevoise.com; Libby, Kenneth A. <KLIBBY@ftc.gov>; Rothman, Harris <hrothman@ftc.gov>; james.fishkin@dechert.com; Drummonds, Katherine <kdrummonds@ftc.gov>; Pai, Rohan <rpai@ftc.gov>; gpaul@whitecase.com; jweingarten@ftc.gov; Frangie, Paul <pfrangie@ftc.gov>; mschaper@debevoise.com; Hamburger, Jacob <jhamburger1@ftc.gov>; Blackburn, Emily <ebackburn@ftc.gov>; jrabraham@debevoise.com; mike.cowie@dechert.com; Hall, Laura <lhall1@ftc.gov>; Perry, Mark <Mark.Perry@weil.com>; Pieters, Lisa <Lisa.Pieters@weil.com>; Sternlieb, Sarah <Sarah.Sternlieb@weil.com>; Obaro, Bambo <Bambo.Obaro@weil.com>; jpitt@wc.com; emainigi@wc.com; apodoll@wc.com; ross.ufberg@dechert.com; yosi.weitzman@dechert.com; Tyree, Leo <lyree@ftc.gov>; Dixon, Guia <gdixon@ftc.gov>; Barrington, Luna <Luna.Barrington@weil.com>; elena.kamenir@dechert.com; Grant, Trisha <tgrant1@ftc.gov>; Sarmiento, Anjelica <asarmiento@ftc.gov>; Bryson, Alexander James <abryson@ftc.gov>; howard.ullman@dechert.com; Zang, Theodore <TZANG@ftc.gov>; Anderson, Barrett <banderson1@ftc.gov>

**Subject:** RE: Kroger/Albertsons, FTC Docket No. 9428 - Respondents' Expert Witness List

Dear Counsel,

Respondents have disclosed 6 expert witnesses in violation of 16 C.F.R. 3.31A(b), which states: "Each side will be limited to calling at the evidentiary hearing 5 expert witnesses, including any rebuttal or surrebuttal expert witnesses. A party may file a motion seeking leave to call additional expert witnesses due to extraordinary circumstances." Please provide an expert witness list in accordance with the Rules by 5pm ET today to avoid the need to seek appropriate relief.

Sincerely,  
Charlie

---

**From:** Angelotti, Kyle <kyle.angelotti@arnoldporter.com>

**Sent:** Friday, May 10, 2024 6:14 PM

**To:** [matthew.wolf@arnoldporter.com](mailto:matthew.wolf@arnoldporter.com); [michael.b.bernstein@arnoldporter.com](mailto:michael.b.bernstein@arnoldporter.com); [jason.ewart@arnoldporter.com](mailto:jason.ewart@arnoldporter.com); [matthew.shultz@arnoldporter.com](mailto:matthew.shultz@arnoldporter.com); Yasmine Harik -contact <[yasmine.harik@arnoldporter.com](mailto:yasmine.harik@arnoldporter.com)>; [joshua.davis@arnoldporter.com](mailto:joshua.davis@arnoldporter.com); [sonia.pfaffenroth@arnoldporter.com](mailto:sonia.pfaffenroth@arnoldporter.com); [john.holler@arnoldporter.com](mailto:john.holler@arnoldporter.com); [jmfried@debevoise.com](mailto:jmfried@debevoise.com); [luke.sullivan@weil.com](mailto:luke.sullivan@weil.com); Dickinson, Charles <[cdickinson@ftc.gov](mailto:cdickinson@ftc.gov)>; [jason.kleinwaks@weil.com](mailto:jason.kleinwaks@weil.com); Teng, Albert <[ateng@ftc.gov](mailto:ateng@ftc.gov)>; Kim, Janet <[jkim3@ftc.gov](mailto:jkim3@ftc.gov)>; Smith, Joshua <[jsmith3@ftc.gov](mailto:jsmith3@ftc.gov)>; [nborn@debevoise.com](mailto:nborn@debevoise.com); Bies, Katherine <[kbies@ftc.gov](mailto:kbies@ftc.gov)>; Arens, Elizabeth <[earens@ftc.gov](mailto:earens@ftc.gov)>;

[thassi@debevoise.com](mailto:thassi@debevoise.com); Hough, Lily <[lhough@ftc.gov](mailto:lhough@ftc.gov)>; Olson, Eric <[eolson@ftc.gov](mailto:eolson@ftc.gov)>;  
[mcardena@debevoise.com](mailto:mcardena@debevoise.com); [srselden@debevoise.com](mailto:srselden@debevoise.com); Libby, Kenneth A. <[KLIBBY@ftc.gov](mailto:KLIBBY@ftc.gov)>;  
Rothman, Harris <[hr Rothman@ftc.gov](mailto:hr Rothman@ftc.gov)>; [james.fishkin@dechert.com](mailto:james.fishkin@dechert.com); Drummonds, Katherine  
<[kdrummonds@ftc.gov](mailto:kdrummonds@ftc.gov)>; Pai, Rohan <[rpai@ftc.gov](mailto:rpai@ftc.gov)>; [gpaul@whitecase.com](mailto:gpaul@whitecase.com); Weingarten, James  
<[jweingarten@ftc.gov](mailto:jweingarten@ftc.gov)>; Frangie, Paul <[pfrangie@ftc.gov](mailto:pfrangie@ftc.gov)>; [mschaper@debevoise.com](mailto:mschaper@debevoise.com); Hamburger,  
Jacob <[jhamburger1@ftc.gov](mailto:jhamburger1@ftc.gov)>; Blackburn, Emily <[eblackburn@ftc.gov](mailto:eblackburn@ftc.gov)>;  
[jrabraham@debevoise.com](mailto:jrabraham@debevoise.com); [mike.cowie@dechert.com](mailto:mike.cowie@dechert.com); Hall, Laura <[lhall1@ftc.gov](mailto:lhall1@ftc.gov)>;  
[mark.perry@weil.com](mailto:mark.perry@weil.com); [lisa.pieters@weil.com](mailto:lisa.pieters@weil.com); [sarah.sternlieb@weil.com](mailto:sarah.sternlieb@weil.com); [bambo.obaro@weil.com](mailto:bambo.obaro@weil.com);  
[jpitt@wc.com](mailto:jpitt@wc.com); [emainigi@wc.com](mailto:emainigi@wc.com); [apodoll@wc.com](mailto:apodoll@wc.com); [ross.ufberg@dechert.com](mailto:ross.ufberg@dechert.com);  
[yosi.weitzman@dechert.com](mailto:yosi.weitzman@dechert.com); Tyree, Leo <[lt Tyree@ftc.gov](mailto:lt Tyree@ftc.gov)>; Dixon, Guia <[gdixon@ftc.gov](mailto:gdixon@ftc.gov)>;  
[luna.barrington@weil.com](mailto:luna.barrington@weil.com); [elena.kamenir@dechert.com](mailto:elena.kamenir@dechert.com); Grant, Trisha <[tgrant1@ftc.gov](mailto:tgrant1@ftc.gov)>;  
Sarmiento, Anjelica <[asarmiento@ftc.gov](mailto:asarmiento@ftc.gov)>; Bryson, Alexander James <[abryson@ftc.gov](mailto:abryson@ftc.gov)>;  
[howard.ullman@dechert.com](mailto:howard.ullman@dechert.com); Zang, Theodore <[TZANG@ftc.gov](mailto:TZANG@ftc.gov)>; Anderson, Barrett  
<[banderson1@ftc.gov](mailto:banderson1@ftc.gov)>

**Subject:** Kroger/Albertsons, FTC Docket No. 9428 - Respondents' Expert Witness List



[kyle.angelotti@arnoldporter.com](mailto:kyle.angelotti@arnoldporter.com) sent you a  
secure message

Access message

Counsel,

Please find attached Respondents' expert witness list and disclosures  
required by Paragraph 21(a) of the Scheduling Order.

Best,  
Kyle



Attachments expire on Jun 09, 2024



1 PDF

2024.05.10 - Respondents' Expert Witness List (Part 3).pdf



1 compressed file

2024.05.10 Respondents' Supplemental Expert Material.zip

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**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BEFORE THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES**

**In the Matter of**

**The Kroger Company**

**and**

**Albertsons Companies, Inc.**

**Docket No. 9428**

**FTC RULE 3.22(g) STATEMENT**

Complaint Counsel respectfully submits this Statement, pursuant to Rule 3.22(g) of the Federal Trade Commission’s Rules of Adjudicative Practice, 16 C.F.R. § 3.22(g), and Provision 4 of this Court’s Scheduling Order. Complaint Counsel has attempted to confer in good faith with counsel for Respondents The Kroger Company (“Kroger”) and Albertsons Companies, Inc. (“Albertsons”) to conform their expert witness list to comply with FTC Rule 3.31A(b).

Respondents served their expert witness list on Friday, May 10, 2024.

On Monday, May 13, 2024, Complaint Counsel notified Respondents via email to counsel of record that Respondents’ expert witness list violated FTC Rule 3.31A(b) because it identified six expert witnesses. Complaint Counsel asked Respondents’ counsel to serve a new list that complied with the five-expert limit in Rule 3.31A(b).

That evening, Respondents’ counsel replied via email and declined to amend their expert witness list.

Dated: May 16, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

By: s/ James H. Weingarten  
James H. Weingarten  
Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20580  
Telephone: (202) 326-3570  
Email: [jweingarten@ftc.gov](mailto:jweingarten@ftc.gov)

*Counsel Supporting the Complaint*

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BEFORE THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES**

**In the Matter of**

**The Kroger Company**

**and**

**Albertsons Companies, Inc.**

**Docket No. 9428**

**[PROPOSED] ORDER**

Upon consideration of Complaint Counsel’s Motion To Require Respondents To Comply with FTC Rule 3.31A(b) and Identify No More than Five Expert Witnesses and any opposition to that motion:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Complaint Counsel’s Motion is GRANTED.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondents shall serve on counsel of record in this matter an amended expert witness list that identifies no more than five expert witnesses.

Respondents shall serve their amended expert witness list within two business days of the date of this Order.

ORDERED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
D. Michael Chappell  
Chief Administrative Law Judge

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on May 16, 2024, I filed the foregoing document electronically using the FTC's E-Filing System, which will send notification of such filing to:

April Tabor  
Secretary  
Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Rm. H-113  
Washington, DC 20580  
ElectronicFilings@ftc.gov

The Honorable D. Michael Chappell  
Administrative Law Judge  
Federal Trade Commission  
600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Rm. H-110  
Washington, DC 20580

I also certify that I caused the foregoing document to be served via email to:

Michael B. Bernstein  
Matthew Wolf  
Sonia Pfaffenroth  
Joshua Davis  
Michael Kientzle  
Jason Ewart  
Yasmine Harik  
Christina Cleveland  
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP  
601 Massachusetts Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
Telephone: (202) 942-5227  
Email: michael.b.bernstein@arnoldporter.com  
Email: matthew.wolf@arnoldporter.com  
Email: sonia.pfaffenroth@arnoldporter.com  
Email: joshua.davis@arnoldporter.com  
Email: michael.kientzle@arnoldporter.com  
Email: jason.ewart@arnoldporter.com  
Email: yasmine.harik@arnoldporter.com

John Holler  
Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer LLP  
250 West 55<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10019  
Telephone: (212) 836-7739



Email: john.holler@arnoldporter.com

Mark Perry  
Luke Sullivan  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
2001 M Street, NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20036  
Telephone: (202) 682-7511  
Email: mark.perry@weil.com  
Email: luke.sullivan@weil.com

Luna Barrington  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
767 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10153  
Telephone: (212) 310-8421  
Email: luna.barrington@weil.com

Bambo Obaro  
Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP  
201 Redwood Shores Parkway  
Redwood Shores, CA 94065  
Telephone: (650) 802-3083  
Email: bambo.obaro@weil.com

*Counsel for The Kroger Company*

Enu A. Mainigi  
Tyler Infinger  
Adam J. Podoll  
Thomas Ryan  
Williams and Connolly LLP  
680 Maine Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20024  
Telephone: (202) 434-5000  
Email: emainigi@wc.com  
Email: tinfinger@wc.com  
Email: apodoll@wc.com  
Email: tryan@wc.com

Edward Hassi  
Debevoise & Plimpton LLP  
801 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Telephone: (202) 383-8135  
Email: thassi@debevoise.com

Michael Schaper  
Shannon R. Selden  
J. Robert Abraham  
Natascha Born  
Jaime Freilich-Fried  
Marieugenia Cardenas  
Tom E. Buckley  
Heather T. Mehler  
Marie Ventimiglia  
Debevoise & Plimpton LLP

66 Hudson Boulevard  
New York, NY 10001  
Telephone: (212) 909-6737  
Email: mschaper@debevoise.com  
Email: srselden@debevoise.com  
Email: jrabraham@debevoise.com  
Email: nborn@debevoise.com  
Email: jmfried@debevoise.com  
Email: mcardena@debevoise.com  
Email: tebuckley@debevoise.com  
Email: htmehler@debevoise.com  
Email: msventim@debevoise.com

Mike Cowie  
James Fishkin  
Dechert LLP  
1900 K Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006  
Telephone: (202) 261-3339  
Email: mike.cowie@dechert.com  
Email: james.fishkin@dechert.com

Thomas Miller  
Dechert LLP  
Cira Centre  
2929 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
Telephone: (215) 994-2906  
Email: thomas.miller@dechert.com

*Counsel for Albertsons Companies, Inc.*

s/ James H. Weingarten  
James H. Weingarten  
Federal Trade Commission  
Bureau of Competition  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20580  
Telephone: (202) 326-3570  
Email: [jweingarten@ftc.gov](mailto:jweingarten@ftc.gov)

*Counsel Supporting the Complaint*