

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BEFORE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION**

COMMISSIONERS: **Edith Ramirez, Chairwoman**
 Julie Brill
 Maureen K. Ohlhausen
 Joshua D. Wright

In the Matter of

**AB Acquisition, LLC,
a limited liability company.**

Docket No. C-4424

ORDER TO MAINTAIN ASSETS

The Federal Trade Commission (“Commission”), having initiated an investigation of the proposed acquisition by AB Acquisition, LLC (“Albertson’s” or “Respondent”) of United Supermarkets L.L.C. (“United”), and Respondent having been furnished thereafter with a copy of a draft Complaint that the Bureau of Competition proposed to present to the Commission for its consideration and which, if issued by the Commission, would charge Respondent with violations of Section 7 of the Clayton Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 18, and Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45; and

Respondent, its attorneys, and counsel for the Commission having thereafter executed an Agreement Containing Consent Orders (“Consent Agreement”), containing an admission by Respondent of all the jurisdictional facts as set forth in the aforesaid draft Complaint, a statement that the signing of said Consent Agreement is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by Respondent that the law has been violated as alleged in such Complaint, or that the facts as alleged in such Complaint, other than jurisdictional facts, are true, and waivers and other provisions as required by the Commission’s Rules; and

The Commission, having thereafter considered the matter and having determined that it had reason to believe that the Respondent has violated the said Acts, and that a Complaint should issue stating its charges in that respect, and having determined to accept the executed Consent Agreement and to place the Consent Agreement on the public record for a period of thirty (30) days for the receipt and consideration of public comments, the Commission hereby issues its Complaint, makes the following jurisdictional findings, and issues this Order to Maintain Assets:

1. Respondent AB Acquisition, LLC is a company organized, existing, and doing business under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Delaware, with its company headquarters and principal place of business located at 250 Parkcenter Boulevard, Boise, Idaho;
2. The Federal Trade Commission has jurisdiction of the subject matter of this proceeding and of Respondents, and the proceeding is in the public interest.

I.

IT IS ORDERED that, as used in this Order to Maintain Assets, the definitions used in the Consent Agreement and the Decision and Order shall apply. In addition, "Supermarket To Be Maintained" means any Supermarket business identified as part of the Assets To Be Divested under the Decision and Order.

II.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that:

- A. Respondent shall maintain the viability, marketability, and competitiveness of the Assets To Be Divested, and shall not cause the wasting or deterioration of the Assets To Be Divested, nor shall it cause the Assets To Be Divested to be operated in a manner inconsistent with applicable laws, nor shall it sell, transfer, encumber or otherwise impair the viability, marketability or competitiveness of the Assets To Be Divested. Respondent shall conduct or cause to be conducted the business of the Assets To Be Divested in the regular and ordinary course and in accordance with past practice (including regular repair and maintenance efforts) and shall use best efforts to preserve the existing relationships with suppliers, customers, employees, and others having business relations with the Assets To Be Divested in the ordinary course of business and in accordance with past practice.
- B. Respondent shall not terminate the operation of any Supermarket To Be Maintained. Respondent shall continue to maintain the inventory of each Supermarket To Be Maintained at levels and selections consistent with those maintained by Respondent at such Supermarket in the ordinary course of business consistent with past practice. Respondent shall use best efforts to keep the organization and properties of each Supermarket To Be Maintained intact, including current business operations, physical facilities, working conditions, staffing levels, and a work force of equivalent size, training, and expertise associated with the Supermarket To Be Maintained. Included in the above obligations, Respondent shall, without limitation:
 1. Maintain all operations and departments, and not reduce hours, at each Supermarket To Be Maintained;
 2. Not transfer inventory from any Supermarket To Be Maintained, other than in the ordinary course of business consistent with past practice;

3. Make any payment required to be paid under any contract or lease when due, and otherwise pay all liabilities and satisfy all obligations associated with each Supermarket To Be Maintained, in each case in a manner consistent with past practice;
4. Maintain the books and records of each Supermarket To Be Maintained;
5. Not display any signs or conduct any advertising (e.g., direct mailing, point-of-purchase coupons) that indicates that Respondent is moving its operations at a Supermarket To Be Maintained to another location, or that indicates a Supermarket To Be Maintained will close;
6. Not conduct any “going out of business,” “close-out,” “liquidation” or similar sales or promotions at or relating to any Supermarket To Be Maintained; and
7. Not change or modify in any material respect the existing advertising practices, programs and policies for each Supermarket To Be Maintained, other than changes in the ordinary course of business consistent with past practice for Supermarkets of the Respondent not being closed or relocated.

III.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall notify the Commission at least thirty (30) days prior to:

- A. Any proposed dissolution of Respondent;
- B. Any proposed acquisition, merger or consolidation of Respondent; or
- C. Any other change in the Respondent, including but not limited to assignment and the creation or dissolution of subsidiaries, if such change might affect compliance obligations arising out of this Order to Maintain Assets.

IV.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, for the purpose of determining or securing compliance with this Order to Maintain Assets, and subject to any legally recognized privilege, and upon written request with reasonable notice to Respondent made to its principal United States offices, Respondent shall permit any duly authorized representative of the Commission:

- A. Access, during office hours of Respondent and in the presence of counsel, to all facilities, and access to inspect and copy all books, ledgers, accounts, correspondence, memoranda and all other records and documents in the possession or under the control of Respondent relating to compliance with this Order to Maintain Assets, which copying services shall be provided by

Respondents at the request of the authorized representative(s) of the Commission and at the expense of Respondent; and

- B. Upon five (5) days' notice to Respondent and without restraint or interference from Respondent, to interview officers, directors, or employees of Respondent, who may have counsel present, regarding any such matters.

V.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this Order to Maintain Assets shall terminate at the earlier of:

- A. Three (3) business days after the Commission withdraws its acceptance of the Consent Agreement pursuant to the provisions of Commission Rule 2.34, 16 C.F.R. § 2.34; or
- B. With respect to each Supermarket To Be Maintained, the day after Respondent's (or a Divestiture Trustee's) completion of the divestiture of Assets To Be Divested related to such Supermarket, as described in and required by the Decision and Order.

Provided, however, that if the Commission, pursuant to Paragraph II.A. of the Decision and Order, requires the Respondent to rescind any or all of the divestitures contemplated by any Purchaser Agreement, then, upon rescission, the requirements of this Order to Maintain Assets shall again be in effect with respect to the relevant Assets To Be Divested until the day after Respondent's (or a Divestiture Trustee's) completion of the divestiture(s) of the relevant Assets To Be Divested, as described in and required by the Decision and Order.

By the Commission.

April J. Tabor
Acting Secretary

ISSUED: December 23, 2013

SEAL