

**ANALYSIS OF AGREEMENT CONTAINING  
CONSENT ORDERS TO AID PUBLIC COMMENT**  
*In the Matter of Seven & i Holdings Co., Ltd.; 7-Eleven, Inc.; and Sunoco LP*  
*File No. 171-0126, Docket No. C-4641*

**I. Introduction**

The Federal Trade Commission (“Commission”) has accepted for public comment, subject to final approval, an Agreement Containing Consent Orders (“Consent Agreement”) from Seven & i Holdings Co., Ltd. and 7-Eleven, Inc. (collectively, “7-Eleven”), and Sunoco LP (“Sunoco”) (collectively, the “Respondents”). The Consent Agreement is designed to remedy the anticompetitive effects that likely would result from 7-Eleven’s proposed acquisition of certain Sunoco retail fuel assets (the “Transaction”).

Absent a remedy, the Transaction would raise competitive concerns in 76 local markets in 20 metropolitan statistical areas (“MSAs”). Under the terms of the proposed Consent Agreement, 7-Eleven must sell retail fuel outlets in some local markets to Sunoco and reject Sunoco retail fuel outlets in other local markets pursuant to the Respondents’ asset purchase agreement (thereby allowing Sunoco to retain these assets). The divestitures must be completed no later than 90 days after the closing of 7-Eleven’s acquisition of Sunoco. The Commission and Respondents have agreed to an Order to Maintain Assets that requires Respondents to operate and maintain each 7-Eleven divestiture outlet in the normal course of business through the date Sunoco acquires the outlet.

The Commission has placed the proposed Consent Agreement on the public record for 30 days to solicit comments from interested persons. Comments received during this period will become part of the public record. After 30 days, the Commission will again review the proposed Consent Agreement and any comments received, and will decide whether it should withdraw from the Consent Agreement, modify it, or make it final.

**II. The Respondents**

Respondent Seven & i Holdings Co., Ltd, a publicly traded company headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, operates convenience stores and retail fuel outlets throughout the United States and the world. 7-Eleven’s U.S. network consists of approximately 8,500 stores located in 35 states. More than 1,000 locations are company-operated, making 7-Eleven one of the largest convenience store operators in terms of company-owned stores and the second-largest chain overall in the country. 7-Eleven convenience store locations operate under the 7-Eleven banner, while its retail fuel outlets operate under a variety of company and third-party brands.

Respondent Sunoco operates convenience stores and retail fuel outlets in the United States and Canada. With more than 1,300 convenience stores and retail fuel outlets in the United States, Sunoco is one of the largest chains in the country. Sunoco’s U.S. convenience stores operate primarily under the APlus and Stripes banners, while its retail fuel outlets operate under

a variety of company and third-party brands. Sunoco also has an extensive wholesale fuel business that supplies more than 6,800 third-party outlets.

### **III. The Proposed Acquisition**

On April 6, 2017, 7-Eleven, through its wholly owned subsidiaries 7-Eleven, Inc. and SEI Fuel Services, Inc. (“SEI Fuel Services”), entered into an agreement with Sunoco to acquire approximately 1,100 retail fuel outlets for approximately \$3.3 billion. Sunoco would continue to operate its wholesale business and approximately 200 retail fuel outlets following the Transaction. SEI Fuel Services would enter into a 15-year fuel supply agreement with Sunoco, LLC as a part of the Transaction.

The Commission’s Complaint alleges that the Transaction, if consummated, would violate Section 7 of the Clayton Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 18, and that the asset purchase agreement constitutes a violation of Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45, by substantially lessening competition for the retail sale of gasoline and the retail sale of diesel in 76 local markets across 20 MSAs.

### **IV. The Retail Sale of Gasoline and Diesel**

The Commission’s Complaint alleges that relevant product markets in which to analyze the Transaction are the retail sale of gasoline and the retail sale of diesel. The retail sale of gasoline and the retail sale of diesel constitute separate relevant markets because the two are not interchangeable. Consumers require gasoline for their gasoline-powered vehicles and can purchase gasoline only at retail fuel outlets. Likewise, consumers require diesel for their diesel-powered vehicles and can purchase diesel only at retail fuel outlets.

The Commission’s Complaint alleges the relevant geographic markets in which to assess the competitive effects of the Transaction are 76 local markets within the following MSAs: Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH; Brownsville-Harlingen, TX; Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY; Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL; Corpus Christi, TX; Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL; Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood, TX; Laredo, TX; McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX; Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL; Gettysburg, PA; Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL; Pittsburgh, PA; Richmond, VA; San Antonio, TX; Sarasota-Bradenton-Venice, FL; Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL; Rio Grande City-Roma, TX; Victoria, TX; and Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV. Each particular geographic market is unique, with factors such as commuting patterns, traffic flows, and outlet characteristics playing important roles in determining the scope of the geographic market. Retail fuel markets are highly localized and can range up to a few miles in size.

The Transaction would substantially increase the market concentration in each of the 76 local markets, resulting in highly concentrated markets. In 18 local markets, the Transaction would result in a monopoly. In 39 local markets, the Transaction would reduce the number of independent market participants from three to two. In 19 local markets, the Transaction would reduce the number of independent market participants from four to three.

According to the Commission's Complaint, the Transaction would reduce the number of independent market participants in each market to three or fewer. The Transaction would thereby substantially lessen competition in these local markets by increasing the likelihood that 7-Eleven would unilaterally exercise market power and by increasing the likelihood of successful coordination among the remaining firms. Absent relief, the Transaction would likely result in higher prices in each of the 76 local markets.

Entry into each relevant market would not be timely, likely, or sufficient to deter or counteract the anticompetitive effects arising from the Transaction. Significant entry barriers include the availability of attractive real estate, the time and cost associated with constructing a new retail fuel outlet, and the time associated with obtaining necessary permits and approvals.

## **V. The Proposed Consent Agreement**

The proposed Consent Agreement remedies the Transaction's anticompetitive effects by requiring 7-Eleven to sell retail fuel outlets in some local markets to Sunoco and reject Sunoco retail fuel outlets in other local markets pursuant to the Respondents' asset purchase agreement (thereby allowing Sunoco to retain these assets). Sunoco intends to convert the acquired or retained stations from company-operated sites to commission agent sites. This remedy would preserve competition as it is today, ensure that the divestiture assets go to a viable, large-scale competitor, and reduce the risks and costs associated with asset integration.

The Commission is satisfied that allowing Sunoco to acquire or retain retail fuel stations and transition them to commission agent sites is an appropriate remedy. Most importantly, the proposed remedy preserves competition in each local market. Indeed, as Sunoco controls retail fuel pricing at both its company-operated stations and its commission agent stations, Sunoco and 7-Eleven would continue as independent retail fuel competitors in each local market. Moreover, Sunoco is a large, viable competitor capable of maintaining the competitive landscape in each local market. Finally, the proposed Consent Agreement reduces the uncertainty and costs relating to integration since Sunoco already is familiar with the majority of the stations at issue.

The proposed Consent Agreement also requires that for up to six months following the divestiture, with up to an additional twelve months at the buyer's option, 7-Eleven make available transitional services, as needed, to assist the buyer of each divestiture asset. The buyer may extend the period for an additional twelve months, but only with Commission approval.

In addition to requiring outlet divestitures, the proposed Consent Agreement also requires 7-Eleven to provide the Commission (and Florida, Texas, or Virginia, where applicable) notice before acquiring designated outlets in the 76 local areas for ten years. The prior notice provision is necessary because acquisitions of the designated outlets likely would raise competitive concerns and may fall below the HSR Act premerger notification thresholds.

The proposed Consent Agreement contains additional provisions designed to ensure the effectiveness of the proposed relief. For example, Respondents have agreed to an Order to Maintain Assets that will issue at the time the proposed Consent Agreement is accepted for public comment. The Order to Maintain Assets requires Respondents to operate and maintain

each divestiture outlet in the normal course of business through the date the Respondents' complete divestiture of the outlet, thereby maintaining the economic viability, marketability, and competitiveness of each divestiture asset. During this period, and until such time as the buyer (or buyers) no longer requires transitional assistance, the Order to Maintain Assets authorizes the Commission to appoint an independent third party as a monitor to oversee the Respondents' compliance with the requirements of the proposed Consent Agreement.

The proposed Consent Agreement also requires Sunoco to take steps to ensure that its employees in charge of setting retail fuel prices at the acquired or retained retail fuel outlets do not have access to confidential information about Sunoco's post-Transaction wholesale supply of 7-Eleven's retail fuel stations. To ensure appropriate firewalls remain in place for the duration of the Respondents' fuel supply agreement, the proposed Consent Agreement has a term of fifteen years.

The purpose of this analysis is to facilitate public comment on the proposed Consent agreement, and the Commission does not intend this analysis to constitute an official interpretation of the proposed Consent Agreement or to modify its terms in any way.