

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BEFORE THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS: Maureen K. Ohlhausen, Acting Chairman
Terrell McSweeney

_____)	
In the Matter of)	
)	
ALIMENTATION COUCHE-TARD INC.,)	Docket No. C-4635
a corporation; and)	
)	
CROSSAMERICA PARTNERS LP,)	
a limited partnership.)	
)	
_____)	

COMPLAINT

Pursuant to the Clayton Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act (“FTC Act”), and its authority thereunder, the Federal Trade Commission (“Commission”), having reason to believe that Respondent Alimentation Couche-Tard Inc. has, through its wholly owned subsidiary Oliver Acquisition Corp., entered into an agreement to acquire certain equity interests of Holiday Companies (“Holiday”) subsidiaries, that such acquisition, if consummated, would violate 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 that a proceeding in respect thereof would be in the public interest, hereby issues this complaint, stating its charges as follows.

I. RESPONDENTS

ACT

1. Respondent Alimentation Couche-Tard Inc. (“ACT”) is a corporation organized, existing, and doing business under, and by virtue of, the laws of Quebec, Canada, with its office and principal place of business located at 4204 Industriel Boulevard, Laval, Quebec H7L OE3, Canada. Circle K Stores, Inc. (“Circle K”) is a wholly owned subsidiary of ACT.
2. Respondent ACT is, and at all times relevant herein has been, engaged in, among other things, the retail sale of gasoline and diesel fuel in the United States.

3. Respondent ACT and the corporate entities under its control are, and at all times relevant herein have been, engaged in commerce, as “commerce” is defined in Section 1 of the Clayton Act as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 12, and Section 4 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 44.

CAPL

1. Respondent CrossAmerica Partners LP (“CAPL”) is a limited partnership organized, existing, and doing business under, and by virtue of, the laws of the State of Delaware, with its office and principal place of business located at 515 Hamilton Street, Suite 200 Allentown, Pennsylvania, 18101. Circle K indirectly owns all of the membership interests in CrossAmerica GP LLC, CAPL’s general partner.

2. Respondent CAPL is, and at all times relevant herein has been, engaged in, among other things, the retail sale of gasoline and diesel fuel in the United States.

3. Respondent CAPL and the corporate entities under its control are, and at all times relevant herein have been, engaged in commerce, as “commerce” is defined in Section 1 of the Clayton Act as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 12, and Section 4 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 44.

II. THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION

4. Pursuant to an Equity Interest Purchase Agreement dated July 10, 2017, ACT proposes to acquire, through its wholly owned subsidiary Oliver Acquisition Corp., all of the equity interests of certain Holiday subsidiary companies. ACT proposes to acquire the equity interests of the following Holiday subsidiaries, each of which was a Minnesota corporation at the time the Equity Interest Purchase Agreement was signed: Holiday Stationstores, Inc.; Lyndale Terminal Co.; Erickson Petroleum Corporation; Independent Diversified Transportation, Inc.; and Holiday Diversified Services, Inc.

5. The Acquisition is subject to Section 7 of the Clayton Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 18.

III. THE RELEVANT MARKET

6. Relevant product markets in which to analyze the effects of the Acquisition are the retail sale of gasoline and the retail sale of diesel. Consumers require gasoline for their gasoline-powered vehicles and can purchase gasoline only at retail fuel outlets. Consumers require diesel for their diesel-powered vehicles and can purchase diesel only at retail fuel outlets. No economic or practical alternative to the retail sale of gasoline or diesel at retail fuel outlets exists.

7. Relevant geographic markets in which to analyze the effects of the Acquisition include ten local markets within the following cities: Aitkin, Hibbing, Minnetonka, Mora, Saint Paul, and Saint Peter in Minnesota, and Hayward, Siren, and Spooner in Wisconsin.

8. The relevant geographic markets for retail gasoline and retail diesel are highly localized, ranging up to a few miles, depending on local circumstances. Each relevant market is distinct and fact-dependent, reflecting the commuting patterns, traffic flows, and outlet characteristics unique to each market. Consumers typically choose between nearby retail fuel outlets with similar characteristics along their planned routes.

IV. MARKET STRUCTURE

9. The Acquisition, if consummated, would reduce the number of competitively constraining independent market participants from three to two in five local markets, and from four to three in five other local markets. The Acquisition would result in a highly concentrated market in each of these ten markets.

V. BARRIERS TO ENTRY

10. Entry into each relevant market would not be timely, likely, or sufficient to deter or counteract the anticompetitive effects arising from the Acquisition. 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.

VI. EFFECTS OF THE ACQUISITION

11. The effects of the Acquisition, if consummated, may be substantially to lessen competition or to tend to create a monopoly in the relevant markets in violation of Section 7 of the Clayton Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 18, and Section 5 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45, by:

- a. increasing the likelihood that Respondents ACT and CAPL would unilaterally exercise market power in the relevant markets; and
- b. increasing the likelihood of collusive or coordinated interaction between any remaining competitors in the relevant markets.

VII. VIOLATIONS CHARGED

12. The Acquisition, if consummated, would violate Section 7 of the Clayton Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 18, and Section 5 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45.

The Equity Interest Purchase Agreement entered into by Holiday and Oliver Acquisition Corp. constitutes a violation of Section 5 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Federal Trade Commission, having caused this Complaint to be signed by the Secretary and its official seal affixed, at Washington, D.C., this fifteenth day of December, 2017, issues its Complaint against Respondents.

By the Commission.

Donald S. Clark
Secretary