

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
vs.  
ZEN-NOH GRAIN CORP.  
and  
BUNGE NORTH AMERICA INC.**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ,

*Plaintiff*

v. ,

ZEN-NOH GRAIN CORP.

and

BUNGE NORTH AMERICA INC.

*Defendants.*

Civil Action No.:

**COMPETITIVE IMPACT STATEMENT**

The United States of America under Section 2(b) of the Antitrust Procedures and Penalties Act 15 U.S.C. § 16(b)–(h) (the “APPA” or “Tunney Act”) files this Competitive Impact Statement relating to the proposed Final Judgment submitted for entry in this civil antitrust proceeding.

**I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROCEEDING**

On April 21 2020 Zen-Noh Grain Corp. (“ZGC”) agreed to acquire 35 operating and 13 idled U.S. grain elevators from Bunge North America Inc. (“Bunge”) for approximately \$300 million (“the Transaction”). The United States filed a civil antitrust Complaint on June 1 2021 seeking to enjoin the proposed Transaction. The Complaint alleges that the likely effect of the Transaction would be to substantially lessen competition for purchases of corn and soybeans in nine geographic areas of the United States in violation of Section 7 of the Clayton Act 15 U.S.C. § 18. ,

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At the same time the complaint was filed, the United States filed a proposed Final Judgment and an Asset Preservation and Hold Separate Stipulation and Order (“Stipulation”), which are designed to address the anticipated effects of the Transaction. The proposed Final Judgment, explained in full below, requires the Defendants to divest certain grain elevators and related assets of Bunge or ZG affiliate GB Enterprises, Inc. (“the Divestiture Assets”) to Versen Grain LLC and Versen International Holdco LLC (“Versen”), or their acquirer or acquirers acceptable to the United States, within 30 calendar days after entry of the Stipulation.

Under the terms of the Stipulation, the Defendants will take certain steps to ensure that the Divestiture Assets remain independent; that all of the Divestiture Assets remain economically viable, competitive, and saleable; that Defendants will reserve and maintain the Divestiture Assets; and that the level of competition that existed between Defendants prior to the Transaction is maintained during the pendency of the required divestiture.

The United States and Defendants have stipulated that the proposed Final Judgment may be entered after compliance with the APPA. Entry of the proposed Final Judgment will terminate this action, except that the court will retain jurisdiction to construe, modify, enforce the provisions of the Final Judgment and to unshelve litigations therefrom.

**II. DESCRIPTION OF EVENTS GIVING RISE TO THE ALLEGED VIOLATION**

**(A) The Defendants and the Proposed Transaction**

Defendant ZG, headquartered in Vinton, Louisiana, is a subsidiary of the National Federation of Agricultural Producers of Louisiana. ZG owns and operates a state-of-the-art export elevator located on the Mississippi River near Natchitoches, Louisiana, from which it trades and exports corn, soybeans, sorghum, wheat, and grain by-products. Export elevators

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receive grain through various means from farmers and exporters. Export exporters store the aggregated grain to be loaded onto outgoing ships. ZGC does not own grain exporters and relies upon its affiliate CGB Enterprises (“CGB”) to supply the majority of the corn and other agricultural commodities ZGC exports from CoVeT. Post-acquisition ZGC intends to use the exporters that it proposes to acquire from BuGe to CGB to operate through CGB’s wholly owned subsidiary Consolidated Grain and Barge Co.

CGB is a 50-50 joint venture between ZGC and Tochu Corporation, a global trading company. CGB operates more than 100 exporters in the United States, many of which are located along the Mississippi, Ohio, Arkansas and Missouri Rivers. CGB is the fifth-largest grain company in the United States by storage capacity. CGB’s grain merchandisers are in direct contact with thousands of farmers actively seeking to purchase grain from them. Currently, CGB serves approximately 60% of the grain purchases to ZGC.

Defendant BuGe is the North American subsidiary of BuGe Limited. BuGe is a large grain business and food ingredient company that owns and operates grain exporters, oilseed processing plants and edible oil refineries across grain export terminals. BuGe is the eighth-largest grain company in the United States by storage capacity. Post-acquisition, BuGe will continue to purchase grain in the United States via its export exporter on the Mississippi River in Destrehan, Louisiana, and its export terminal in Lovington, Washington (joint venture with Tochu Corporation). In addition to the export terminals, BuGe will retain ownership interests in eight grain exporters in Illinois and Indiana.

The 35 operating exporters ZGC proposes to acquire from BuGe are located in Illinois, Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, Louisiana, Mississippi and

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Tennessee – p y ong the Miss ss pp R ve nd ts t but es, nd p edo n nt y h nd e  
co n nd soybe ns.

**(B) R l vant Mark ts and th Comp titiv Eff cts of th Transaction e**

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For convenience of farmers away from their gran to all their "country" elevator located in close proximity to their farm than industrial and river elevator. Such elevator provides grain collection and buying point in rural counties and may provide other services such as grain storage, drying and conditioning services. Upon aggregating sufficient quantity of grain or when market prices are not attractive country elevator ultimately their gran to industrial or to the larger rail or river elevator that can transport the grain to industrial export elevator.

Today ZGC and its affiliate CGB compete against Bung to purchase corn and soybeans from farmers. In particular neighboring geographic areas a Bung river elevator and an nearby ZGC or CGB elevator represent two of only a handful of grain purchasing alternatives for a farmer. In the neighboring geographic areas ZGC and Bung currently compete vigorously to win farmers' business by offering better prices and more attractive amenities such as faster grain drop-off services and better grain grading. Faster drop-off services allow a farmer to get back to their field more quickly and take better use of their truck and employ ultimately saving time and money. If an elevator grading grain more harshly or inconsistently which may lead to a lower price paid the farmer has the option of going to a competing elevator which may grade differently. The Transaction will limit competition between ZGC and Bung in the location. As a result many U.S. farmers are likely to receive lower prices and poorer quality services when taking to their gran.

### 1. Relevant Product Markets

ZGC (mainly through CGB) and Bung own grain elevator primarily located at rail terminals and along navigable rivers. They compete with other grain purchasers including ethanol processors, feed mills and crush processors to purchase corn and soybeans from U.S.

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farmers' r e d users a d c u try elevat rs. C r a d s y ea s are each disti ct pr ducts with ut reas a le su stitutes differi g fr m ther agricultural c mm dities a d e a ther i their physical characteristics mea s f pr ducti uses a d prici g. Because f the le gth f 7 gr wi g seas s a d the suita ility f c r a d s y ea s t certai climates a d regi s farmers f these cr ps w uld t switch t pr ducti f ther agricultural c mm dities i suffice t um ers t re der u pr fita le a small ut sig ifica t decrease i price y a hyp thetical m ps ist f that cr p. The purchase f c r a d the purchase f s y ea s f r e d use r f r sale t the exp rt mar et each c stitute a releva t pr duct mar et a d li e f c mmerce u der Secti f the Clayt Act 15 U.S.C. § 18.

## 2. Relevant Geographic Markets

Farmers typically haul grai y truc t ear y elevat rs r e d users. Tra sp rtati c sts i crease sig ifica tly with every mile the farmers must tra sp rt the grai t reach a purchaser reduci g the farmers' pr fits. Tra sp rti g grai als c sumes farmers' time. F r these reas s a small cha ge i price w uld t li ely cause farmers t sig ifica tly expa d the dista ce they are willi g t drive t sell their grai . The dista ce a farmer is willi g t drive is determi ed i large part y the sec d-cl sest p te tial purchaser which is the est c mpetitive threat t the purchaser cl sest t the farmer.

Rail r river elevat rs a d ther grai purchasi g facilities such as grai crush pla ts a d etha l pla ts typically purchase grai fr m withi the facility's draw area. "Draw area" is a i dustry term that descri es the l cati s f farms fr m which the facility expects t acquire m st f its grai . Each elevat r r e d user has a u ique draw area due t characteristics such as surr u di g r ad c diti s cr p utput l cal t p graphy a d pr ximity f c mpeti g

purchase of raw material of a grain purchasing facility is determined by transportation time and cost and is usually very localized.

The raw material of one grain facility frequently will overlap with that of another, resulting in competition between the facilities to purchase grain from farmers. Some farming areas of the country may be located such that they fall within the overlapping raw material of only a few competing grain purchasing facilities. In particular, in the following areas where the

Dominant river valleys have overlapping raw material, there are only a small number of grain purchase competing to purchase farmers' corn and soybean:

- (a) The overlapping raw material of a valley in the vicinity of McGregor, Iowa;
- (b) The overlapping raw material of a valley in the vicinity of Albany/Fulton, Illinois;
- (c) The overlapping raw material of a valley in the vicinity of Shawntown, Illinois;
- ( ) The overlapping raw material of a valley in the vicinity of Caruthersville, Missouri;
- ( ) The overlapping raw material of a valley in the vicinity of Huffman, Arkansas;
- (f) The overlapping raw material of a valley in the vicinity of Ocola, Arkansas;
- (g) The overlapping raw material of a valley in the vicinity of Helena, Arkansas;
- (h) The overlapping raw material of a valley in the vicinity of Lake Providence, Louisiana; and
- (i) The overlapping raw material of a valley in the vicinity of Littleworth, Louisiana.

The geographic area that defines a hypothetical monopoly (a "monopoly" is a buyer that controls the purchase in a given market), the buyer's individual count to the hypothetical monopoly. A hypothetical monopoly of the purchase of corn or soybean in each of these areas would impose at least a small but significant and non-transitory constraint on

the price paid to farmers. Such price increases for these products will not be effected by farmers selling to purchasers outside their local market the excess transportation. As farmers in these regions have largely determined the best use of their land, price increases will not be effected by farmers' switching to growing alternative crops. Farmers currently growing corn soybeans are unlikely to convert to production of other agricultural commodities in sufficient numbers to prevent small but significant price increases. Nor will these farmers thwart post-transition price increases by selling instead to local country elevators. Country elevators simply resell grain to river and rail elevators rather than users; if Deenants lower prices post-transition, country elevators will be able to lower their own prices to farmers to maintain profitability. Consequently, country elevators cannot mitigate price increases resulting from the Transition. Therefore, each of the overlapping concerns above constitute relevant geographic markets within the meaning of Section 7 of the Clayton Act, 15 U.S.C. § 18, for the purposes of analyzing this transition.

### 3. Competitive Effects

In each of the nine relevant geographic markets, ZGC (and its affiliate CGB) and Bunge are two very small number of grain purchasers competing to buy corn soybeans; in two of these markets, CGB and Bunge are the only elevators available to farmers. Farmers located within these geographic regions open to this competition but in competitive price for their grain. ZGC's acquisition of Bunge's elevators will substantially lessen competition for the purchase of corn soybeans in these markets, enabling it to unilaterally depress prices paid to farmers for their crops.

Because there are few alternative grain purchasers within these geographic regions, purchasers grain are highly concentrated, with the Deenants controlling a majority



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corn and/or soybean purchase in a given year. For example, in 2019, the Defendant purchased upward of 95% of the total corn and soybean output of farmers in Pemiscot County, Missouri; Pemiscot County falls within the drainage area of Bung's Caruthersville, Missouri river elevator, and the drainage area of CGB's Caruthersville and Cottonwood, Missouri river elevators.

By eliminating head-to-head competition between ZGC (and its affiliate CGB) and Bung for grain purchase in the geographic market, the Transaction would result in lower prices paid to farmers, lower quality of service offered to farmers at the grain origination elevators, and reduced choice of outlet for farmers to sell their grain. The Transaction would substantially lessen competition and harm the many farmers selling their crop to river elevators along the Mississippi River and its tributaries.

#### 4. Entry

New entrants and expansion competitors alike will not timely and efficiently incorporate to prevent the likely anticompetitive effects of Defendant ZGC's acquisition of Bung's elevators. Competitors are unlikely to construct new elevators in the geographic market because of the high cost of construction and the difficulty of finding appropriate locations to build along the Mississippi or its tributaries. Even assuming such a location could be found and a regulator and permitting requirements could be fulfilled, constructing a river elevator would take approximately two years to complete.

### III. EXPLANATION OF THE PROPOSED FINAL JUDGMENT

The divestiture required by the proposed Final Judgment will remedy the loss of competition alleged in the Complaint by restoring an independent and economically viable competitor for the purchase of corn and soybean in certain geographic markets along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. The proposed Final Judgment requires the Defendant to divest

nine elev<sup>1</sup> in nine geographic markets within 30 days of the entry of the Stipulation by the Court. Vienna, the quiet quiet approved by the United States. In each of the nine geographic markets, Bunge elev<sup>1</sup> compete head to head with the name ZGC CGB elev<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In O ce l, A k n, Bunge h w elev<sup>1</sup> l c i n, "Rive ide," which he n me imple, bu the Mi i ippi, nd "L nd ide," f me y c u h pl n l c ed bi in l nd f m the ive Bunge cu en ly pe e the w l c i n ne c mbined en i y, wi h L nd ide being u ed p im ily f ve fl w ge in upp f Rive ide; imil ly, the p p ed Fin l Judgmen nd S ipul i n view the w Bunge O ce l l c i n ne e f pu p e f emedying the likely h m f m the p p ed T n c i n

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divestiture trustee selected by the United States to execute the divestiture. If a divestiture trustee is appointed, the proposed Final Judgment provides that Defendant GC will pay all costs and expenses of the trustee. The divestiture trustee's commission will be set so as to provide an incentive for the trustee based on the price obtained and the speed with which the divestiture is accomplished. After the divestiture trustee's appointment becomes effective, the trustee will provide periodic reports to the United States setting forth his or her efforts to accomplish the divestiture. If the divestiture has not been accomplished at the end of six months, the divestiture trustee and the United States will make recommendations to the Court, which will enter such orders as appropriate, in order to carry out the purpose of the trust, including extending the trust to the term of the divestiture trustee's appointment.

Under Paragraph IV.I. of the proposed Final Judgment, Defendants must cooperate with and assist the trustee in identifying and, at the option of a trustee, hiring (1) a full-time, part-time, or contract employees employed at the divested entities at any time between August 21, 2020, and the divestiture date; (2) a divestiture manager, general manager, and divestiture superintendent employed by Bunge or CGB whose responsibilities are shared between or among divested entities and any non-divested entities, at any time between August 21, 2020, and the divestiture date; and (3) a regional manager employed by Bunge or one of its organizational divisions, wherever the divestiture manager, wherever located, whose job duties support the general purchasing business of any of the Bunge entities, at any time between August 21, 2020, and the divestiture date. Defendants must provide Visaion, or any other trustee or trustees, with information on these employees and a prohibited from interfering with the efforts of Visaion, or any other trustee or trustees, to hire them. Z

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The proposed Final Judgment includes a non-liquidation (Paragraph IV.I.6.) prohibiting the Defendant from attempting to hire relevant personnel that have agreed to work for the acquirer, subject to certain narrow exceptions, such as an annual voluntary layoff by the acquirer. The non-liquidation limitation is for 12 months, which is a length of time intended to encompass the first harvest season for which the acquirer will be operating the olive elevator. It also limits competition only to certain relevant personnel—regional/general manager, elevator manager, merchant, bookkeeper, and the superintendant—the employee intimately involved with farmer outreach and elevator operation. The categories of employees protected by the non-liquidation are integral to maintaining customer relations while ownership of the asset is transferring; elevator manager and the general merchant, in particular, are needed to help maintain customer relationships to get grants to the elevator. Defendants are not restricted, however, from advertising employment pending a general liquidation or advertising and hiring relevant personnel who apply for an employment pending through a general liquidation or advertising.

Under Paragraph IV.M. of the proposed Final Judgment, at the option of the acquirer or the acquirer, and subject to approval by the United States Intellectual Property Commission, Defendant must enter into a non-retractable provision with the acquirer or acquirer with transition services for back office, human resource, information technology, for a period of up to six months after the vestiture occurs, in terms and conditions reasonably related to market conditions for the provision of the transition services. The transition services covered by the proposed Final Judgment are those that might reasonably be necessary to ensure that an acquirer or acquirer can readily and promptly use the asset to compete in the relevant market.

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For the true reasons of the Final Judgment, Paragraph XI.A. requires Defendant ZG to provide at least 30 calendar day advance notification to the United States of its intent to directly or indirectly acquire any asset, or any interest in, grain purchasing facilities located within a 100-mile radius of any dividend. The notification required by Paragraph XI.A. applies to transactions that are not subject to the reporting and waiting period required by the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvement Act of 1976, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 18a (the “HSR Act”).<sup>2</sup> Notification of such non-reportable transactions is necessary because acquisition of a single dividend or another grain purchasing company is not uncommon in the grain industry, and such an acquisition, or even an acquisition of a full unit of a dividend, likely would not meet the notification threshold of the HSR Act, but nevertheless could have a substantial anticompetitive effect.

The reasons of the Final Judgment also contain provisions designed to protect confidentiality and ask the enforcement of the Final Judgment to be an active obligation. Paragraph XIV.A. provides that the United States retain and reserve all right to enforce the provisions of the reasons of the Final Judgment, including its right to seek an order or contempt for the court. Under the true reasons of this paragraph, Defendant has agreed that in any civil contempt action, any motion to show cause, or any similar action brought by the United States regarding an alleged violation of the Final Judgment, the United States may establish the violation and the appropriateness of any remedy by a preponderance of the evidence and that Defendant has waived any argument that a different standard of proof should apply. This provision aligns with C

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<sup>2</sup> Paragraph XI.M. except for the reporting requirement Defendant ZG’s acquisition of grain purchasing facilities that were held by Defendant ZG as of January 1, 2021. The United States has already accounted for ZG’s control over the asset in its competitive analysis of the transaction and structuring of the dividend. C

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standa d plian e bligati ns with the standa d p that applies t the unde lying ense that the plian e it ents add ess.

Pa ag aph XIV.B. p vides additi nal lai i ati n ega ding the inte p etati n the p visi ns the p p sed Final udg ent. The p p sed Final udg ent was d a ted t est e petiti n that w uld the wise be ha ed by the t ansa ti n. De endants ag ee that they will abide by the p p sed Final udg ent, and that they ay be held in nte pt this C u t ailing t ply with any p visi n the p p sed Final udg ent that is stated spe i i ally and in eas nable detail, as inte p eted in light this p petitive pu p se.

Pa ag aph XIV.C. the p p sed Final udg ent p vides that i the C u t inds in an en e ent p eeding that De endants have vi lated the Final udg ent, the United States ay apply t the C u t a ne-ti e extensi n the Final udg ent, t gethe with su h the elie as ay be app p iate. In additi n, t pensate A e i an taxpaye s any sts ass iated with investigati ng and en ing vi lati ns the p p sed Final udg ent, Pa ag aph XIV.C. p vides that in any su ess ul e t by the United States t en e the Final udg ent against a De endant, whethe litigated es lved be e litigati n, that De endants will ei bu se the United States att neys' ees, expe ts' ees, and the sts in u ed in nne ti n with any en e ent e t, in luding the investigati n the p tential vi lati n.

Pa ag aph XIV.D. states that the United States ay ile an a ti n against a De endant vi lating the Final udg ent up t u yea s a te the Final udg ent has expi ed been te inated. This p visi n is eant t add ess i u stan es su h as when eviden e that a vi lati n the Final udg ent u ed du ing the te the Final udg ent is n t dis ve ed until a te the Final udg ent has expi ed been te inated when the e is n t su i ient ti e the United States t plete an investigati n an alleged vi lati n until a te the Final

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Judgment shall expire or be terminated. This provision, for four years from the date of the Final Judgment shall expire or be terminated, unless a violation of the Final Judgment occurs during the term of the Final Judgment. Such

Further, Section XV of the proposed Final Judgment provides that the Final Judgment will expire four years from the date of its entry, except for five years from the date of its entry, the Final Judgment may be terminated upon the order of the United States District Court. Defendants' duties shall be completed and the violation of the Final Judgment is a gross violation of public interest.

**IV. REMEDIES AVAILABLE TO POTENTIAL PRIVATE LITIGANTS**

Section 4 of the Clayton Act, 15 U.S.C. § 15, provides that any person who is injured as a result of conduct prohibited by the antitrust laws may bring suit in federal court or recover damages. Persons who suffer damage, shall be considered as persons whose damages are a direct result of the entry of the proposed Final Judgment. It is imperative that the rights of private antitrust damages be protected. Under the provisions of Section 5 of the Clayton Act, 15 U.S.C. § 16, the proposed Final Judgment is a prima facie injury to private antitrust damages may be brought by the Defendants.

**V. PROCEDURES AVAILABLE FOR MODIFICATION OF THE PROPOSED FINAL JUDGMENT**

The United States District Court has stipulated that the proposed Final Judgment may be reviewed by the Court for compliance with the provisions of the APPA, provided that the United States Solicitor General is satisfied. The APPA conditions are upon the Court's determination of the proposed Final Judgment is in the public interest.

The APPA provides a period of 60 days preceding the effective date of the proposed Final Judgment within which any person may submit to the United States

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comment on the proposed Final Judgment. Any person who wishes to comment should do so within 60 days of the date of publication of this Competitive Impediment in the Federal Register, or the date of publication in new pages of the Summary of the Competitive Impediment, whichever is later. All comments received during this period will be considered by the U.S. Department of Justice, which may in free will consent to the proposed Final Judgment any time before the Court's entry of the Final Judgment. The comment and the response of the United States will be filed with the Court. In addition, comments will be posted on the U.S. Department of Justice, Antitrust Division's online website, under the circumstances, published in the Federal Register.

Written comments should be submitted to:

Robert L. Pope  
 Chief, Transaction, Energy and Antitrust Section  
 Antitrust Division  
 U.S. Department of Justice  
 450 Fifth Street, NW, Suite 8000  
 Washington, DC 20530

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The proposed Final Judgment provides that the Court's jurisdiction over this action, and the parties may apply to the Court for any order necessary to carry out the modification, in execution, or enforcement of the Final Judgment.

## VI. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED FINAL JUDGMENT

As an alternative to the proposed Final Judgment, the United States considered full relief on the merits in Defendant's favor. The United States could have continued the litigation and sought to eliminate Defendant's injunction in ZGC's acquisition of the nine elevators from Bun-e. The United States is satisfied, however, that the divestiture of the elevators described in the proposed Final Judgment will remedy the anticompetitive effects identified in the Complaint, prevent competition for the purchase of condenser coils in the nine elevator equipment



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market for the Mississippi and Ohio River. Thus, the proposed Final Judgment achieves a substantial benefit to the United States and would have benefited the public, but avoid the time, expense, and uncertainty associated with the merits of the Claim.

## VII. STANDARD OF REVIEW UNDER THE APPA FOR THE PROPOSED FINAL JUDGMENT

The Clayton Act, as amended by the APPA, requires that proposed class judgments in antitrust cases brought by the United States be subject to a 60-day comment period, after which the Court has determined whether every proposed Final Judgment “is in the public interest.” 15 U.S.C. § 16(e)(1). In making that determination, the Court, in accordance with the authority amended in 2004, is required to consider:

(A) the competitive impact of such judgment, including determination of whether the proposed judgment is necessary to prevent anticompetitive behavior, and the availability of other remedies; and whether the proposed judgment is necessary to prevent anticompetitive behavior; and the adequacy of such judgment to the court deemed necessary to determine whether the proposed judgment is in the public interest; and

(B) the impact of every such judgment upon competition in the relevant market for the proposed judgment, upon the public generally and individual affected parties; and the public benefit, if any, to be derived from a determination of the issue at hand.

15 U.S.C. § 16(e)(1)(A) & (B). In considering the authority of the Court’s inquiry in determining whether a proposed judgment is in the public interest, the Court has held that “the public interest” is a term that is not defined by the statute. *United States v. Microsoft Corp.*, 56 F.3d 1448, 1461 (D.C. Cir. 1995); *United States v. U.S. Airways Grp., Inc.*, 38 F. Supp. 3d 69, 75 (D.D.C. 2014) (explaining that the “court’s inquiry is limited” to the Tukey Act amendments); *United States v. InBev N.V./S.A.*, No. 08-1965 (JR), 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 84787, at \*3 (D.D.C. Aug. 11, 2009) (explaining that the court’s review of a proposed judgment is limited and that it requires “whether the government’s determination that the proposed remedy will cure the antitrust

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violation of the complaint, and whether the claim of forceful judicial administration is viable.”).

A the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit has held, under the APPA a court could, among other things, hear a claim between the parties and the specific allegations in the complaint, whether the proposed Federal Judicial Officers are, whether the force of the claim is sufficient, and whether it may possibly harm the parties. *See Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1458–62. Whether the adequacy of the relief sought by the proposed Federal Judicial Officers, a court may “often make a determination of fact and law.” *United States v. W. Elec. Co.*, 993 F.2d 1572, 1577 (D.C. Cir. 1993) (quoting *mark* (omitted)); *see also Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1460–62; *United States v. Alcoa, Inc.*, 152 F. Supp. 2d 37, 40 (D.D.C. 2001); *United States v. Enova Corp.*, 107 F. Supp. 2d 10, 16 (D.D.C. 2000); *In Bev*, 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 84787, at \*3. In fact, “[t]he balance of of competition and political interests affected by a proposed administrative rule, in the first instance, is the discretion of the Agency General.” *W. Elec. Co.*, 993 F.2d at 1577 (quoting *mark* (omitted)). “The court should bear in mind the flexibility of the public interest inquiry: the court’s function is to determine whether the rule’s array of rights and liabilities is one that will best serve society, but only one that the firm has the rule limit with the reaches of the public interest.” *Microsoft*, 56 F.3d at 1460 (quoting *mark* (omitted)). Moreover, the requirement would “have enormous practical consequences for the government’s ability to operate in the future,” contrary to congressional intent. *Id.* at 1456. “The Treaty Act would do a disservice to the public interest.” *Id.* C

The United States' preconditions about the efficacy of the remedy are to be afforded deference by the Court. *See, e.g. Microsoft* 56 F.3d 1461 (recognizing courts should give "due respect to the Justice Department's . . . view of the nature of the case"); *United States v. Iron Mountain, Inc.* 217 F.3d 146-152-53 (D.D.C. 2016) ("In evaluating objections to the selection of remedies under the Tunney Act, courts must be mindful that [t]he government need not prove that the selections will perfectly remedy the alleged harms[;] it need only provide sufficient basis for concluding that the selections are reasonably equitable remedies for the alleged harms.") (internal citations omitted); *United States v. Republic Servs., Inc.* 723 F.3d 157-160 (D.D.C. 2010) (noting "the deferential review to which the government's proposed remedies accord"); *United States v. Archer-Daniels-Midland Co.* 272 F.3d 116 (D.D.C. 2003) ("As a circuit court must accord due respect to the government's predictions of the effect of proposed remedies, its perception of the market structure in its view of the nature of the case"). The ultimate questions whether "the remedies [obtained by the Federal Judgment] so consonant with the illegal charges of foul play of the 'reaches of the public interest.'" *Microsoft* 56 F.3d 1461 (quoting *W. Elec. Co.* 900 F.2d 309).

Moreover, the Court's role under the APPAS scheme of reviewing the remedy in relationship to the violations that the United States has alleged in its complaint does not authorize the Court to "construct [its] own hypothetical case when evaluating the decrees," *Microsoft* 56 F.3d 1459; *see also U.S. Airways* 38 F.3d 75 (noting that the court must simply determine whether there is sufficient foundation for the government's objections such as its conclusions regarding the proposed selections are reasonable); *InBev* 2009 U.S.D. Lexis 84787 \*20 ("the 'public interest' is not to be measured by comparing the violations alleged in the complaint against those the court believes could have or even

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should have been illegal”). Because the “court’s authority to review the corporation’s entire activity on the government’s exercising its prosecutorial discretion by bringing cases in the first place” it follows that “the court is only authorized to review the corporation’s activity” and not to “actively re-evaluate the complaint” to inquire into other matters that the United States is not pursuing. *Microsoft* 56 F.3d at 1459–60.

In its 2004 amendments to the APPA Congress made clear its intent to preserve the practical benefits of using consent judgments proposed by the United States in antitrust enforcement. Pub. L. 108-237 § 221 contains the unambiguous instruction that “[n]othing in this section shall be construed to require the court to conduct a full inquiry hearing or to require the court to permit anyone to intervene.” 15 U.S.C. § 16(c)(2); *see also U.S. Airways* 38 F. Supp. 3d at 76 (indicating that the court is not required to hold a full inquiry hearing or to permit intervenors to participate in its review under the Tunney Act). This language explicitly wrote into the statute what Congress intended when it first enacted the Tunney Act in 1974. As Senator Tunney explained: “[t]he court is nowhere compelled to go to trial or to engage in extensive proceedings which might hamper the effectiveness of the prompt and less costly settlement through the consent enforcement process.” 119 Cong. Rec. 24,598 (1973) (statement of Sen. Tunney). “A court cannot make its public interest determination based on the competitive impact of settlement in response to public comments alone.” *U.S. Airways* 38 F. Supp. 3d at 76 (citing *Enova Corp.* 107 F. Supp. 2d at 17).

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**VIII. DETERMINATIVE DOCUMENTS**

There are no determinative materials or documents within the meaning of the APPA that were considered by the United States in formulating the proposed Final Judgment.

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Respectfully submitted,

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/s/

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