

Leading Electrolytic Capacitor Manufacturer Indicted for Price Fixing

Nippon Chemi-Con Is Eighth Company Charged in Long-Running Conspiracy

A federal grand jury returned an indictment against an electrolytic capacitor manufacturer for participating in a conspiracy to fix prices for electrolytic capacitors sold to customers in the United States and elsewhere, the Department of Justice announced today.

The indictment, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California in San Francisco, charges that Nippon Chemi-Con Corporation, based in Japan, conspired to suppress and eliminate competition for electrolytic capacitors from as early as September 1997 until January 2014. Three current Nippon Chemi-Con executives, and one former Nippon Chemi-Con executive, were previously indicted for their participation in the conspiracy: Takuro Isawa, Takeshi Matsuzaka, Yasutoshi Ohno, and Kaname Takahashi.

“Today’s indictment affirms the Antitrust Division’s commitment to holding companies accountable for conspiring to cheat American consumers,” said Assistant Attorney General Makan Delrahim of the Department of Justice’s Antitrust Division. “The Division will prosecute companies—no matter where they are located—that violate U.S. antitrust laws.”

According to the one-count felony charge, Nippon Chemi-Con carried out the conspiracy by agreeing with co-conspirators to fix prices of electrolytic capacitors during meetings and other communications. Capacitors were then sold in accordance with these agreements. As part of the conspiracy, Nippon Chemi-Con and its co-conspirators took steps to conceal the conspiracy, including the use of code names and providing misleading justifications for prices and bids submitted to customers in order to cover up their collusive conduct.

As a result of the government’s ongoing investigation, eight companies and ten individuals have been charged with participating in a conspiracy to fix prices of electrolytic capacitors. Electrolytic capacitors store and regulate electrical current in a variety of electronic products, including computers, televisions, car engines and airbag systems, home appliances, and office equipment.

An indictment merely alleges that crimes have been committed, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Today’s charge results from ongoing federal antitrust investigations being conducted by the Antitrust Division’s San Francisco Office and the FBI’s San Francisco Field Office into price fixing, bid rigging and other anticompetitive conduct in the capacitor industry. Anyone with information related to the focus of this investigation should contact the Antitrust Division’s Citizen Complaint Center at 1-888-647-3258, visit <https://www.justice.gov/atr/report-violations>, or call the FBI tip line at 415-553-7400.

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