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### **ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN SUES LCD PANEL MANUFACTURERS ENGAGED IN PRICE-FIXING CARTEL**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan has filed an antitrust action against 22 major technology companies alleging that these companies illegally fixed the prices for liquid crystal display (“LCD”) screens used in computers, televisions, and cell phones.

The lawsuit, filed Tuesday in the Circuit Court of Cook County, asks the court to prohibit the companies from engaging in the illegal activity and to award as damages the overcharges paid on the purchase of these items by the State of Illinois and its residents. The suit also seeks civil penalties, fees and costs.

“These companies conspired to illegally fix the prices for LCD screens,” said Attorney General Madigan. “This lawsuit seeks to recover the money that Illinois residents and the State paid because of the price-fixing conspiracy.”

The Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese companies, in combination with their American and certain foreign subsidiaries, allegedly agreed with each other to raise the prices each would charge for their LCD screens. These companies controlled approximately 90 percent of the sales of LCD screens sold in the United States. As a result, the prices for the products containing these screens were raised to levels significantly above the prices that Illinois consumers would otherwise have paid had the prices been set through normal competition.

The complaint cites evidence that:

- Top-level executives of these companies, including some of their CEOs, attended secret meetings on a regular monthly or quarterly basis to agree on minimum prices, price targets and increases, and prices to be charged for specific screens and screen sizes.
- These companies exchanged price and production information to insure that their consumers would have to pay the agreed prices.
- These companies also met face-to-face and by phone in smaller groups or one-on-one to coordinate their prices and avoid letting competition lead to lower prices.

The defendants named in the action are AU Optronics Corporation; AU Optronics Corporation America, Inc.; Chi Mei Innolux Corporation; Chi Mei Optoelectronics Corp. USA, Inc.; CMO Japan Co., Ltd.; Epson Imaging Devices Corp.; Epson Electronics America, Inc.; Hitachi, Ltd.; Hitachi Displays, Ltd.; Hitachi America, Ltd.; Hitachi Electronic Devices (USA), Inc.; LG Display Co., Ltd.; LG Display America, Inc.; Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.; Samsung Semiconductor, Inc.; Samsung Electronics America, Inc.; Sharp Corporation; Sharp Electronics Corporation; Toshiba Corporation; Toshiba America Electronic Components, Inc.; Toshiba Mobile Display Co., Ltd.; and Toshiba America Information Systems, Inc.

Assistant Attorneys General Blake Harrop, Chad Brooker and Jamie Manning are handling the case for Madigan’s Antitrust Bureau.

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