

## Attorney General Bill McCollum News Release

April 16, 2009  
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### **McCollum: Lawsuit Alleges Price-Fixing, Anticompetitive Practices by Manufacturers of Auto Filters**

*~ Lawsuit is first of its kind filed by a state attorney general ~*

TALLAHASSEE, FL – Attorney General Bill McCollum announced today that his office has filed a lawsuit against nine of the largest manufacturers of aftermarket auto filters in the United States, alleging a scheme to maximize profits by illegally fixing prices, allocating customers and eliminating price competition. The lawsuit states that the companies knowingly participated in this scheme since at least 1999 at the expense of Florida consumers and governmental entities.

The defendant companies are Champion Laboratories, Inc.; Purolator Filters NA, LLC; Honeywell International Inc.; Wix Filtration Corp LLC; Cummins Filtration Inc.; Donaldson Company, Inc.; Baldwin Filters, Inc.; Affinia Group Inc.; and ArvinMeritor, Inc. The lawsuit claims the defendants sold filters throughout the United States at non-competitive and collusive prices. According to the lawsuit, consumers who purchased auto filters manufactured by a defendant company since 1999 paid artificially inflated prices because of the illegal agreements. These consumers include state and local governmental agencies that purchased filters for government vehicles during the relevant time period.

The lawsuit, filed today in United States District Court in Chicago by the Attorney General's Antitrust Division, alleges that high-level filter company executives conspired to maintain artificially high prices for their companies' filters by agreeing among themselves to fix, increase, maintain and/or stabilize the prices of filters sold in the United States. The executives allegedly communicated about prices and even met with each other on numerous occasions, including at filter industry trade association meetings, to fix the prices and allocate customers and markets. The lawsuit further alleges the defendant companies used misleading information in letters seeking to justify their price increases.

The lawsuit is the first filed by a state attorney general and joins a nationwide group of filters-related lawsuits that have been consolidated in U.S. District Court in Chicago. In addition to requesting that the court award triple damages, injunctive relief and attorneys' fees and costs, the Attorney General's lawsuit also demands civil penalties of up to \$1 million per violation against each defendant. The lawsuit was filed under state and federal antitrust laws as well as Florida consumer protection laws.

A copy of the lawsuit is available online at: [http://myfloridalegal.com/webfiles.nsf/WF/JFAO-7R6QFE/\\$file/FiltersLawsuit.pdf](http://myfloridalegal.com/webfiles.nsf/WF/JFAO-7R6QFE/$file/FiltersLawsuit.pdf)