

Press Release

Attorney General Beemer announces settlement with NFL protecting competition in secondary ticket markets

11/15/2016

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Bruce R. Beemer today announced the Office of Attorney General has reached a multistate settlement with the National Football League to resolve antitrust concerns regarding the league's past policy on the resale of certain tickets. The settlement was reached in the form of an assurance of voluntary compliance under the Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Law.

The NFL's policy required each of the 32 NFL teams to impose a price floor on all secondary market ticket sales on the NFL's Ticket Exchange — the official secondary ticketing platform of the NFL — and related websites officially sanctioned by the league. Under this arrangement, sellers were not permitted to list tickets for resale on the NFL's officially sanctioned resale sites at a price lower than the face-value of the ticket.

"We believe this policy could have resulted in ticket prices rising above their true market value," Attorney General Beemer said. "This settlement resolves this concern and puts in place other provisions that will protect consumers moving forward."

The settlement was joined by Attorneys General from New York, Ohio, Massachusetts, Florida and the District of Columbia. Other terms of the settlement are:

- The NFL is prohibited from directing or requiring ticketing practices among teams that are designed to preclude fans from using competing exchanges.
- New disclosures are required in cases where an individual team imposes its own price floor.
- The NFL is prohibited from interfering with an individual team's efforts to coordinate anti-fraud measures with competing secondary ticket exchanges.
- The NFL will provide the states with copies of any new ticketing contracts that become effective prior to April 2020.
- The NFL will pay approximately \$100,000 toward the costs of this multistate investigation.

The Attorneys General in 2014 began an investigation of the ticket practices of certain NFL teams, including the Buffalo Bills, the New York Jets, the New York Giants, the New England Patriots, the Philadelphia Eagles and the Pittsburgh Steelers. The investigation prompted the NFL to abandon its league-wide price floor policy, leading to the settlement announced today.

The Office of Attorney General deemed the policy to be a method, act or practice violative of the Unfair Trade Practice and Consumer Protection Law. The assurance of voluntary compliance was filed in the Commonwealth Court.

This matter was handled on behalf of the Commonwealth by Chief Deputy Attorney General Tracy Wertz and Senior Deputy Attorneys General Joseph Betsko and Jennifer Thomson. They all work for the Office of Attorney General's Antitrust Section, which is tasked with protecting the free enterprise system by detecting anti-competitive practices and taking legal action to stop them.

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