



OREGON AG ROSENBLUM ACTS TO STOP KROGER-ALBERTSONS MERGER

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Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum today joined the Federal Trade Commission and a bipartisan coalition of attorneys general from across the nation in [acting to block the proposed Kroger-Albertsons merger \(https://www.doj.state.or.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Public-Redacted-Complaint_20240226.pdf\)](https://www.doj.state.or.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Public-Redacted-Complaint_20240226.pdf).

Oregon, the FTC, and the other AGs filed to enjoin the merger in U.S. District Court in Portland. This followed a vote by FTC commissioners Monday morning; it is the result of thorough investigations by the FTC and the states into the proposed merger's anticipated effects.

"We are doing this to protect Oregon consumers and workers," said AG Rosenblum. "We believe this proposed merger would hurt both, and we're doing our part to prevent it from going forward."

Kroger and Albertsons are the nation's two largest grocery chains. In Oregon, the two corporations operate 176 stores, serving nearly every community in the state. Kroger operates 51 Fred Meyer and 4 QFC stores, while Albertsons operates 96 Safeway and 25 Albertsons stores.

Today's lawsuit seeks to block the proposed Albertsons-Kroger merger. The FTC, Oregon, and the other states participating in this legal action allege the proposed merger would violate the federal Clayton Act. That act prohibits acquisitions which may substantially lessen competition.

"If big grocery stores are allowed to reduce competition this way," said Rosenblum, "they can charge higher prices for food for no good reason and reduce services, including in their pharmacies. They can also slow the growth of employees' wages, or even reduce some of those wages. Working conditions and employee benefits can suffer, as well. In short, there's no good for consumers or workers in this proposed merger — and lots of bad."

Oregon Department of Justice and Federal Trade Commission investigators found compelling evidence that direct, head-to-head competition between Kroger and Albertsons has forced the two chains to compete vigorously against one another — both on price and on the quality of goods and services offered at their stores. This competition has also benefitted workers, by producing higher wages, better benefits, and improved working conditions.

"This supermarket mega-merger comes as American consumers have seen the cost of groceries rise steadily over the past few years. Kroger's acquisition of Albertsons would lead to additional grocery price hikes for everyday goods, further exacerbating the financial strain consumers across the country face today," said Henry Liu, Director of the FTC's Bureau of Competition.

Joining Oregon and the FTC in the lawsuit are Arizona, California, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, and Wyoming. Colorado and Washington have already filed lawsuits to stop the merger in their respective state courts.