

## TRW To Pay Consumers \$5.4M In Auto Parts Antitrust MDL

By **Melissa Lipman**

*Law360, New York (September 23, 2014, 5:47 PM ET)* -- TRW Automotive Holdings Corp. has agreed to pay \$5.4 million to settle claims in multidistrict litigation from U.S. car buyers that said it conspired with other auto part makers to fix the price of occupant safety systems, plaintiffs' counsel announced Tuesday.

TRW and its TRW Deutschland Holding GmbH unit reached a deal with the end payor plaintiffs in part of the MDL over auto parts that deals with systems made up of seat belts, air bags, steering wheels and safety electronic systems. The agreement, which was filed with the court Sept. 17, along with a \$76 million agreement with Yazaki Corp. bring the total settlements the consumer plaintiffs have won in the MDL to more than \$100 million.

"Today's settlements mark another victory in our continued pursuit of justice for consumers and businesses harmed by price-fixing," said Robins Kaplan Miller & Ciresi LLP's Hollis Salzman. "Each settlement brings us one step closer to securing full recovery for the class of injured consumers, and we're pleased that these settlements continue to move us in the right direction."

A spokesman for TRW declined to comment on the matter.

The case is one of many that have followed in the wake of the U.S. Department of Justice's ongoing criminal probe into price-fixing in the auto parts industry.

TRW Deutschland is one of many companies that have plead guilty in the U.S., agreeing to pay a \$5.1 million fine in 2012 for conspiring to fix the prices of seat belts, airbags and steering wheels sold to two German car makers in the U.S. and elsewhere.

The end payors emphasized in their motion for settlement approval that the deal was valuable not only for the financial recovery but for the help they expected to receive from TRW.

"Standing alone, the recovery from TRW is significant," the motion says. "But the settlement is even more valuable to the EPPs because it also requires TRW to provide early and comprehensive cooperation in the form of ... attorney proffers, interviews with and depositions of witnesses, and the production of certain documents (including transactional data), related to the claims asserted in this case."

The settling plaintiffs are represented by Marc M. Seltzer, Steven G. Sklaver, Terrell W. Oxford and Warren T. Burns of Susman Godfrey LLP; Frank C. Damrell, Steven N. Williams, Adam J. Zapala and Elizabeth Tran of Cotchett Pitre & McCarthy LLP; Hollis Salzman, Bernard Persky and William V. Reiss of Robins Kaplan Miller & Ciresi LLP; and E. Powell Miller and Adam T. Schnatz of The Miller Law Firm PC.

TRW is represented by James P. Feeney, Howard B. Iwrey, Benjamin W. Jeffers and David J. Council of Dykema Gossett PLLC.

The MDL is In re: Automotive Parts Antitrust Litigation, case number 2:12-md-02311, in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division. The case is In re: Occupant Safety Systems - End-Payor Actions, case number 2:12-cv-00603, in the same court.

--Additional reporting by David McAfee and Aaron Vehling. Editing by Emily Kokoll.

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