Case 8:08-bk-13421-ES Doc 1976



Docket #1976 Date Filed: 4/21/2010

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Fremont General Corporation, the debtor and debtor in possession in the above-captioned chapter 11 case (the "Debtor"), and the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors appointed in the Debtor's chapter 11 case (the "Committee") respectfully submit this joint statement in response to the contentions of Signature Holdings Group, LLC ("Signature") and New World Acquisition LLC ("New World"), on the one hand, and the Official Committee of Equity Holders (the "OEC"), on the other hand, that certain recent modifications to the parties' respective competing chapter 11 plans are "material," and that such plans as modified cannot be confirmed in the absence of an entirely new solicitation process.

While the Debtor and the Committee have often disagreed in good faith on a number of issues in this case, today they stand together in clear agreement on a critical issue: The plan process can and should promptly proceed as scheduled and reach its final conclusion, resulting in the timely confirmation of a chapter 11 plan for the Debtor.

In the event the Court finds that any modifications to the plans submitted by Signature, New World, or the OEC (collectively, the "<u>Proponents</u>") adversely impact the treatment provided to any accepting class of creditors or equity holders who has not consented in writing to the modification(s) made to such plan(s), both the Debtor and the Committee believe that resolicitation of votes on the plan(s) should not be an option for any of the Proponents.¹ Rather,

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Although the Proponents challenge the modifications to the respective competing plans as "material," and claim that "material" modifications to a plan require the re-solicitation of votes, the applicable rules and cases establish that re-solicitation of votes should only be necessary in circumstances in which the modification adversely impacts the treatment of previously accepting classes of creditors and equity holders. Thus, if a modification does not adversely affect the treatment of the claim of any creditor or interest of any equity holder who has not consented in writing to the modification, then it will be deemed accepted by all creditors and equity holders who previously accepted the plan. Correspondingly, if a proposed modification adversely impacts the treatment of the claim of any creditor or interest of any equity holder who has already rejected the plan, then consent of such creditors and equity holders to the modification is unnecessary. See, e.g., Fed. R. Bankr. P. 3019(a) (stating that if "the proposed modification does not adversely change the treatment of the claim of any creditor or the interest of any equity security holder who has not accepted in writing the modification, it shall be deemed accepted by all creditors and equity security holders who have previously accepted the plan"); In re Enron Corp., No. 01-16034, 2004 Bankr. LEXIS 2549, at *259 (Bankr. S.D.N.Y. July 15, 2004) ("The best test [for whether written consent under Federal Rule of Bankruptcy Procedure 3019 is required] is whether the modification so affects any creditor or interest holder who accepted the plan that such entity, if it knew of the modification, would be likely to reconsider its acceptance." (quoting 9 Collier on Bankruptcy ¶ 3019.01 (15th ed. Rev. 2004))). Here, it appears that the Proponents generally focus on modifications

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each such Proponent should choose between withdrawing its plan entirely or, in the alternative, amending its plan to effectively withdraw the modifications, if any, that the Court determines would otherwise require re-solicitation of votes. Similarly, if the Court finds any irregularity in the solicitation of or voting on any plan, and that the irregularity is fatal to the Proponent's plan, then the applicable plan must fail and its confirmation should be denied. Certainly, a Proponent that the Court believes engaged in any improper or illicit conduct should not be rewarded with a second chance at soliciting acceptances of its plan at the expense of all innocent stakeholders.

The Debtor and the Committee believe numerous compelling reasons support this balanced approach. First, there will be materially adverse economic consequences for this estate if re-solicitation is permitted to occur or confirmation is delayed. Among other costs, the estate will be saddled with several million dollars of additional administrative liabilities as the Proponents essentially restart a new contested plan confirmation process, despite the process already proceeding for months. In addition, as the Court is aware, under the terms of its settlement with the Debtor, the Bank of New York will be entitled to a total recovery of \$10 million (as opposed to \$7 million) on account of its deemed allowed general unsecured claim if it is not paid in full on or before June 30th, which will undoubtedly occur if confirmation proceedings are held in abeyance to accommodate the re-solicitation of one or more plans.

Second, re-solicitation and delaying confirmation of a plan will greatly increase the likelihood that the plan that is ultimately confirmed will be one of liquidation or, at a minimum, a plan that is much less favorable to equity holders than the plans currently before the Court as creditors will have an opportunity to revisit the treatment they receive under the plans. By way of illustration, while each of the plans incorporates the terms of a settlement regarding the post-petition interest to be paid on the Senior Notes, the willingness of the holders of such notes to agree to settle was dependent upon having a plan promptly confirmed. In the event the confirmation process is further delayed in order to accommodate the re-solicitation of any plan,

that are purportedly adverse and "material" to equity holders, but that class voted to reject all of the plans. Consequently, regardless of whether such modifications are actually adverse or "material" to equity holders, there simply is no need to re-solicit their votes or the plans generally.

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the holders of more than 95% of the Senior Notes have already indicated to the Committee that they will withdraw their support for the settlement and oppose any plan which fails to pay post-petition interest at the contract rate. If this issue were litigated and the Court found that holders of the Senior Notes were entitled to the contract rate of interest (as opposed to the federal judgment rate), the estate would have to pay an approximately \$20 million of additional post-petition interest to the holders of the Senior Notes, perhaps rendering the Proponents' plans unconfirmable on feasibility grounds.

Also, with the threat of reinstatement having been eliminated by this Court's finding that the Proponents' business plans preclude such treatment, any leverage the Proponents may have once had to incentivize TOPrS holders to accept a compromise treatment under their plans has also been eliminated. It is dubious that the TOPrS holders would have any continuing incentive to support or accept the treatment provided under the Proponents' plans (in any re-solicitation) given that, under a plan that promptly distributes available cash to satisfy claims, they could receive payment in full by the end of calendar year 2011 as is contemplated in the Committee's plan, which has already been found to be confirmable by the Court.

Third, although the Debtor and the Committee understand that the Court and certain stakeholders may feel some frustration with the conduct of certain of the Proponents or with the increased intensity of their efforts in recent weeks, there is no reason to believe that matters would be any different in a re-solicitation scenario. To the contrary, it is likely that a similar set of events would unfold, with each Proponent jockeying for position following the release of revised balloting results. In fact, before any re-solicitation could even begin, each of the Proponents would likely go to war regarding the form and substance of any further resolicitation materials, appropriate re-solicitation guidelines, and the like. After already completing a heavily negotiated and perhaps unprecedented 5-way solicitation process, the Debtor and the Committee agree that starting at square one would be incredibly wasteful and not in the interest of any stakeholder.

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Fourth and finally, it bears emphasizing that the equities of this case weigh heavily against any re-solicitation or further delay of the confirmation process. Putting aside the fact that this complex case has been pending for nearly two years, the Court has already provided the Proponents with more than a fair opportunity to finalize and solicit their plans. Indeed, in December 2009, after having rescheduled solicitation and confirmation related dates several times (and over a period of several months) to accommodate the request by five separate equity-based proponents for inclusion of their respective plans on the same timeline as the Committee's plan (which was first filed in August 2009), the Court was unequivocal in ruling that the opportunity to become part of the confirmation process had terminated. The clear line drawn by the Court should be enforced. *See, e.g., Taylor v. Freeland & Kronz*, 503 U.S. 638, 644 (1992) ("Deadlines may lead to unwelcome results, but they prompt parties to act and they produce finality."). The Debtor and Committee respectfully submit that further delaying the confirmation process and allowing re-solicitation to occur at this juncture would be contrary to the spirit of the Court's ruling and the estate's interests, and should not be permitted under any scenario.

In summary, although there are many difficult issues left to resolve, the remaining time should provide a full and fair opportunity to do so without any need for re-solicitation.

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DATED: April 21, 2010

/s/ Jonathan S. Shenson
Jonathan S. Shenson, an Attorney with
KLEE, TUCHIN, BOGDANOFF & STERN LLP

/s/ Whitman L. Holt

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-&-

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In re: Fremont General Corp.,		CHAPTER 11
	Debtor(s).	CASE NUMBER 8:08-bk-13421-ES

NOTE: When using this form to indicate service of a proposed order, **DO NOT** list any person or entity in Category I. Proposed orders do not generate an NEF because only orders that have been entered are placed on the CM/ECF docket.

PROOF OF SERVICE OF DOCUMENT

I am over the age of 18 and not a party to this bankruptcy case or adversary proceeding. My business address is: 1901 Avenue of the Stars, 12th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90067.

The foregoing document described **JOINT STATEMENT OF THE DEBTOR AND CREDITORS' COMMITTEE REGARDING PLAN MODIFICATIONS & SOLICITATION** will be served or was served **(a)** on the judge in chambers in the form and manner required by LBR 5005-2(d); and **(b)** in the manner indicated below:

I. TO BE SERVED BY THE COURT VIA NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC FILING ("NEF") — Pursuant to controlling General Order(s) and Local Bankruptcy Rule(s) ("LBR"), the foregoing document will be served by the court via NEF and hyperlink to the document. On April 21, 2010, I checked the CM/ECF docket for this bankruptcy case or adversary proceeding and determined that the following person(s) are on the Electronic Mail Notice List to receive NEF transmission at the email address(es) indicated below:

See following page.

⊠ Service information continued on attached page

II. <u>SERVED BY U.S. MAIL OR OVERNIGHT MAIL</u>(indicate method for each person or entity served):

On **April 21, 2010**, I served the following person(s) and/or entity(ies) at the last known address(es) in this bankruptcy case or adversary proceeding by placing a true and correct copy thereof in a sealed envelope in the United States Mail, first class, postage prepaid, and/or with an overnight mail service addressed as follows. *Listing the judge here constitutes a declaration that mailing to the judge will be completed no later than 24 hours after the document is filed.*

See following page.

III. SERVED BY PERSONAL DELIVERY, FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION OR EMAIL (indicate method for each person or entity served): Pursuant to F.R.Civ.P. 5 and/or controlling LBR, on April 21, 2010, I caused to be served the following person(s) and/or entity(ies) by personal delivery via messenger or (for those who consented in writing to such service method), by facsimile transmission and/or email as follows. Listing the judge here constitutes a declaration that personal delivery on the judge will be completed no later than 24 hours after the document is filed.

See following page.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

04/21/2010Melissa AltamiranoMelissa AltamiranoDateType NameSignature

This form is mandatory. It has been approved for use by the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California.

January 2009 F 9013-3.1

In re: Fremont General Corp.,

Debtor(s). CASE NUMBER 8:08-bk-13421-ES

I. SERVICE BY THE COURT VIA NOTICE OF ELECTRONIC FILING ("NEF")

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In re: Fremont General Corp.,

CHAPTER 11

Debtor(s).

CASE NUMBER 8:08-bk-13421-ES

II. SERVICE BY U.S. MAIL

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Debtor(s).

CASE NUMBER 8:08-bk-13421-ES

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL NOTICE

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Debtor(s).

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III. SERVICE BY MESSENGER

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January 2009 F 9013-3.1