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April 6, 2026

Omeed A. Assefi
Acting Assistant Attorney General
Antitrust Division
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Acting Assistant Attorney General Assefi,

I am writing to urge the Department of Justice to open an antitrust investigation into the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA)'s interference with Connecticut's efforts to keep the Connecticut Sun based in the state. In forcing the Sun's sale to Fertitta Entertainment and move to Houston despite a more lucrative bid to move the team to Hartford, which is in the same media and consumer market, the WNBA abused its monopolistic control over professional women's basketball to flagrantly block potential negotiations and dictate the result for its own purposes, seemingly violating federal antitrust laws.

Over the past twenty years, the Sun have become one of the league's most consistently successful teams both on and off the court, appearing in four WNBA finals, growing a loyal fan base, and benefiting from the culture of basketball excellence of the UConn Huskies. After the Mohegan Tribe began entertaining offers for the team in 2024, multiple competitive bids were submitted for full or partial control of the team. The state of Connecticut worked closely with some prospective buyers to ensure that the team would remain in the state after the sale; other competitive bids would have kept the team in the region. Two offers for full control of the Sun valued the team at \$325 million, which would have set the record for the largest sale of a controlling stake in a Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) team.¹ Notably, this valuation was \$25 million higher than the bid that the WNBA ultimately forced the Tribe to accept.

Despite competitive bids and a loyal fanbase, the WNBA stepped in to block all efforts to keep the Sun in Connecticut. The WNBA explicitly asserted that it would control the team's sale, stating "relocation decisions are made by the WNBA Board of Governors and not by individual

¹ Mike Vorkunov, *Houston Comets expected to return after WNBA's Connecticut Sun relocate to Texas*, ATHLETIC (Mar. 30, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/7157789/2026/03/30/houston-comets-wnba-connecticut-sun-relocation-moving/>.

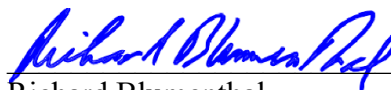
teams.”² The outcome of the league’s dictating to the market was previewed in June 2025, when Commissioner Cathy Engleberg said Houston was “up next” at an event celebrating three teams joining the league.³ Having rigged the process and vetoed Connecticut’s viable offer, the Sun was sold to Fertitta Entertainment in Houston for a reported price of \$300 million. The WNBA claimed the authority to block the mere relocation of the team 40 miles, with the Mohegan Tribe retaining an ownership share, as a “move” subject to WNBA approval.

The WNBA is not exempt from antitrust laws. Indeed, the WNBA’s enormous market power as the only women’s professional basketball league in the United States means that it should face scrutiny whenever it uses that market power to harm competitive processes. Here, the league’s intervention was apparently so decisive that it potentially foreclosed more valuable offers. The price paid by Fertitta Entertainment—\$25 million less than two bids that would have kept the team in New England—shows the WNBA’s power to dictate market outcomes.⁴ The WNBA’s heavy hand in steering the Sun’s sale appears to be market interference so brazen it may constitute interference and bid-rigging—classic signs of monopolist behavior that should alarm the DOJ.

No sports fan deserves to lose their favorite team based on the whims of a monopolist sports league. This is especially true in Connecticut, a state that is famously passionate about women’s basketball. Accordingly, I request that the Department of Justice closely examine WNBA’s steering of the Connecticut Sun’s proposed sale to the Houston and Fertitta Entertainment for potential violations of federal antitrust laws.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate

² *Houston to get WNBA team in 2027 as Connecticut Sun sold and set to relocate, source says*, CBS NEWS (Mar. 28, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/texas/news/houston-wnba-team-connecticut-sun-sale-relocation-2027/>.

³ Alexa Philippou, *Sources: Sun sold to Fertitta family, will relocate to Houston*, ESPN (Mar. 27, 2026), https://www.espn.com/wnba/story/_/id/48324323/sun-sold-fertitta-family-relocate-houston-2027.

⁴ Dan Haar, *Why the Connecticut Sun sale to Houston owner doesn't pass the smell test*, NEW HAVEN REGISTER (Mar. 31, 2026), <https://www.nhregister.com/news/article/connecticut-sun-houston-sale-wnba-antitrust-22158890.php>.