

Closure of the investigation into the alleged price-fixing agreement of the Cavite City Water Station Owners Association (“CCWSOA”) and its members on the prices of alkaline water and purified/mineral water per container in Cavite City

Industry	:	Provision of water refilling services in Cavite City
Case Reference	:	CEO-24-0123-FAI
Case Closed	:	27 April 2026
Issue(s)	:	Possible price-fixing agreement on the prices of alkaline water and purified/mineral water per container in Cavite City by the CCWSOA and its members
Relevant Provision(s)	:	Section 14(a)(1) of the Philippine Competition Act

1. In September 2023, the PCC received a query from the President of CCWSOA seeking advice regarding an “ongoing price war” among water refilling station owners in Cavite City.
 - 1.1. CCWSOA is an association of water refilling stations in Cavite City and was organized to address the price war among WRS and to coordinate the fixing of selling prices of water products in Cavite City.
 - 1.2. Base on the documents and information gathered, the WRS members of the association agreed to fix the price of alkaline water at ₱40.00 per 5-gallon container and purified/mineral water at ₱30.00 per 5-gallon container, effective 01 August 2023, following deliberation and voting among its members.
2. The Enforcement Office conducted an initial assessment (“IA”) of the available information and documents concerning the possible price-fixing conduct of CCWSOA.
 - 2.1. In February 2024, the Enforcement Office informed the association, through the issuance of an Enforcement Advisory Letter and during a meeting, that the conduct of the association and its members may constitute a price-fixing agreement prohibited under Section 14(a) of the Philippine Competition Act (“PCA”), and may result in administrative and criminal liability.
 - 2.2. Notwithstanding the issuance of such warnings, the Enforcement Office



verified that the price-fixing conduct of the association and its members appeared to have persisted. Thus, the Enforcement Office recommended proceeding with a preliminary inquiry ("PI") before the Commission.

3. On 20 June 2024, the Commission, in line with the recommendation of the Enforcement Office, issued a Resolution of even date, directing the conduct of a preliminary inquiry ("PI") concerning the possible price-fixing agreement on the prices of alkaline water and purified/mineral water per container in Cavite City by the CCWSOA and its members.
4. During the course of the PI, CCWSOA admitted the alleged price-fixing conduct, signified its intention to avail of the remedy under Section 2.17 of the 2017 Rules of Procedure of the PCC, and submitted proposed settlement terms. Thereafter, settlement discussions between the Enforcement Office and CCWSOA continued throughout the Full Administrative Investigation ("FAI").
5. Following the PI, the Enforcement Office found that there were reasonable grounds to proceed with the conduct of a FAI. The FAI formally commenced on 20 September 2024.
6. Subsequently, the Enforcement Office submitted to the Commission a Memorandum dated 07 March 2025 recommending the approval of CCWSOA's Written Proposal dated 30 November 2024.
7. In a Resolution dated 27 March 2025, the Commission found that CCWSOA's settlement proposal was fair and reasonable in addressing the competition concerns under investigation. Accordingly, the Commission accepted and approved CCWSOA's Written Proposal for Settlement dated 30 November 2024, subject to the submission of a Revised Written Proposal that includes CCWSOA's commitment to cooperate with, assist, and support the PCC in its enforcement and investigation activities, as well as in the conduct of advocacy projects and activities. The Resolution further directed the Enforcement Office to monitor CCWSOA's compliance with the settlement terms and to promptly report such compliance to the Commission. It also emphasized that CCWSOA's failure to comply with its commitments may result in the imposition of fines.
8. On 13 August 2025, the Enforcement Office received CCWSOA's Revised Written Proposal for Settlement dated 06 August 2025, as required under the Resolution dated 27 March 2025.
9. In a Memorandum dated 28 August 2025, the Enforcement Office recommended to the Commission that CCWSOA's Revised Written Proposal for Settlement dated 06 August 2025 be approved.

10. In a Resolution dated 11 September 2025, CCWSOA's Revised Written Proposal for Settlement dated 06 August 2025 was found to sufficiently comply with the directives set forth in the Resolution dated 27 March 2025. Thus, the Revised Written Proposal was accepted by the Commission, and the Enforcement Office was directed to monitor CCWSOA's compliance with the settlement terms and to promptly report such compliance to the Commission.

II. Findings

13. The evidence obtained by the Enforcement Office from the initial assessment, through the PI, and during the FAI established that CCWSOA and its members entered into an agreement to fix the price of alkaline water at ₱40.00 per 5-gallon container and purified/mineral water at ₱30.00 per 5-gallon container, effective 01 August 2023, following deliberation and voting among its members.
14. The foregoing conduct was likewise admitted by CCWSOA and its members, which led them to seek the remedy under Section 2.17 of the 2017 Rules of Procedure of the PCC, or the submission of a "proposal for settlement".
15. The Commission found the Written Proposal submitted by CCWSOA to be fair and reasonable in addressing the competition concerns under investigation. Hence, it was approved and accepted.
16. Further, the findings during the course of the FAI provide that CCWSOA had ceased and desisted from its price-fixing conduct.

III. Conclusion

17. In view of the findings above, the Enforcement Office formally closed its investigation on 27 April 2026, without prejudice to the conduct of another investigation if the circumstances so warrant.
18. Based on the foregoing, there are no remaining matters that warrant further investigation, and there is no longer any basis to proceed with the filing of a Statement of Objections:
 - 18.1. CCWSOA availed the remedy under Section 2.17 of the 2017 Rules of Procedure of the PCC;
 - 18.2. CCWSOA's Written Proposal for Settlement dated 30 November 2024, as revised on 06 August 2025 pursuant to the Commission's directive, has been accepted and approved by the Commission. The approved settlement proposal adequately addresses the relevant conduct within the scope of the investigation; and

- 18.3. The Enforcement Office's findings in the FAI are consistent with CCWSOA's commitment to cease and desist from its price-fixing conduct.
19. The foregoing findings are based solely on the facts and circumstances of this investigation and relevant only to the particular issues examined herein.