

STATE OF FLORIDA
DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

EL SOL TRADING, INC., AND ECO)	
GREEN MACHINE, LLC,)	
)	
Petitioners,)	
)	
vs.)	Case No. 09-4102
)	
FINISH LINE SCOOTERS, LLC,)	
)	
Respondent.)	
_____)	

RECOMMENDED ORDER

On February 10, 2010, an administrative hearing in this case was conducted in Tallahassee, Florida, before William F. Quattlebaum, Administrative Law Judge, Division of Administrative Hearings (DOAH).

APPEARANCES

For Petitioners: (No appearance)

For Respondent: (No appearance)

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

The issue in the case is whether an application for a new point franchise motor vehicle dealership filed by El Sol Trading, Inc., and Eco-Green Machine, LLC (Petitioners), should be approved.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

By Notice published in the Florida Administrative Weekly (Volume 35, Number 27; July 10, 2009), the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (Department) gave notice that El Sol Trading, Inc., was seeking to establish a new point franchise motor vehicle dealership for the sale of motorcycles manufactured by Zhejiang Leike Machinery Co. Ltd. (ZLMI) at Eco-Green Machine, LLC, at 7000 Park Boulevard, Suite A, Pinellas Park, Florida 33781.

Finish Line Scooters, LLC (Respondent), filed a challenge to the establishment of the dealership. By letter dated July 31, 2009, the Department forwarded the challenge to DOAH. On the same date, DOAH issued an Initial Order, directing the parties to identify the anticipated length of the hearing, dates upon which the parties were available for hearing, and a suggested hearing location. The Initial Order stated that the failure to respond would result in the hearing being scheduled in Tallahassee, Florida. No responses to the Initial Order were filed, and the hearing was scheduled accordingly.

Neither party appeared at the time scheduled for commencement of the hearing. There were no witnesses or exhibits admitted into evidence. No transcript of the hearing was filed. No proposed recommended orders were filed.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. There was no evidence presented at the hearing to establish that the Respondent has a franchise agreement to sell or service ZLMI motor vehicles, the line-make to be sold by Eco-Green Machine, LLC.

2. There was no evidence presented at the hearing that the Respondent's dealership is physically located so as to meet the statutory requirements for standing to protest the establishment of the new point franchise motor vehicle dealership.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

3. The Division of Administrative Hearings has jurisdiction over the parties to and subject matter of this proceeding. §§ 120.569 and 120.57, Fla. Stat. (2009).

4. Section 320.642, Florida Statutes (2009), provides in relevant part as follows:

320.642 Dealer licenses in areas previously served; procedure.--

(1) Any licensee who proposes to establish an additional motor vehicle dealership or permit the relocation of an existing dealer to a location within a community or territory where the same line-make vehicle is presently represented by a franchised motor vehicle dealer or dealers shall give written notice of its intention to the department. . . .

* * *

(2)(a) An application for a motor vehicle dealer license in any community or territory shall be denied when:

1. A timely protest is filed by a presently existing franchised motor vehicle dealer with standing to protest as defined in subsection (3); and

2. The licensee fails to show that the existing franchised dealer or dealers who register new motor vehicle retail sales or retail leases of the same line-make in the community or territory of the proposed dealership are not providing adequate representation of such line-make motor vehicles in such community or territory. The burden of proof in establishing inadequate representation shall be on the licensee.

* * *

(3) An existing franchised motor vehicle dealer or dealers shall have standing to protest a proposed additional or relocated motor vehicle dealer when the existing motor vehicle dealer or dealers have a franchise agreement for the same line-make vehicle to be sold or serviced by the proposed additional or relocated motor vehicle dealer and are physically located so as to meet or satisfy any of the following requirements or conditions:

* * *

(b) If the proposed additional or relocated motor vehicle dealer is to be located in a county with a population of more than 300,000 according to the most recent data of the United States Census Bureau or the data of the Bureau of Economic and Business Research of the University of Florida:

1. Any existing motor vehicle dealer or dealers of the same line-make have a

licensed franchise location within a radius of 12.5 miles of the location of the proposed additional or relocated motor vehicle dealer; or

2. Any existing motor vehicle dealer or dealers of the same line-make can establish that during any 12-month period of the 36-month period preceding the filing of the licensee's application for the proposed dealership, such dealer or its predecessor made 25 percent of its retail sales of new motor vehicles to persons whose registered household addresses were located within a radius of 12.5 miles of the location of the proposed additional or relocated motor vehicle dealer; provided such existing dealer is located in the same county or any county contiguous to the county where the additional or relocated dealer is proposed to be located.

5. The licensees in this case are El Sol Trading, Inc., and Eco-Green Machine, LLC. See §§ 320.60(8) and 320.61, Fla. Stat. (2009).

6. The Respondent is the alleged existing franchised motor vehicle dealer. The Respondent failed to present any evidence at the hearing to establish that it meets the statutory requirements to establish standing, by location or sales volume, to protest the establishment of the new point franchise motor vehicle dealership at issue in this case.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is RECOMMENDED that the Department enter a final order dismissing the protest filed in this case by Finish Line

Scooters, LLC, and granting the Petitioners' request to establish a new point franchise motor vehicle dealership for the sale of ZLMI motorcycles.

DONE AND ENTERED this 9th day of March, 2010, in Tallahassee, Leon County, Florida.

William F. Quattlebaum

WILLIAM F. QUATTLEBAUM
Administrative Law Judge
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Filed with the Clerk of the
Division of Administrative Hearings
this 9th day of March, 2010.

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NOTICE OF RIGHT TO SUBMIT EXCEPTIONS

All parties have the right to submit written exceptions within 15 days from the date of this Recommended Order. Any exceptions to this Recommended Order should be filed with the agency that will issue the Final Order in this case.