From: Randy Walton
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 10:43am
Subject: Comments regarding the Microsoft Settlement

To reviewers of public comments regarding the Microsoft Settlement,

I understand that I have the ability to comment on the proposed settlement between the Justice Department and Microsoft.

I have been using computers daily since the mid-eighties, when my father brought home an early portable IBM computer. I hope to earn my livelihood by working in the computing industry. Consequently, this issue is centrally relevant to my life.

It is widely believed by those familiar with the case that the proposed settlement is completely inadequate. It will do little to punish Microsoft for it's plainly illegal conduct in the past, and virtually nothing whatsoever to prevent future violations of antitrust law. As a consumer, it infuriates me to be forced to pay for increasingly expensive software that diminishes in quality with each release. I applauded the Clinton administration's investigation of Microsoft. Their case was an effort to protect consumers and promote economic growth by restoring fairness and competition to the computer industry. Now that the DOJ is under new management, it has essentially abandoned it's pursuit of Microsoft, suggesting that the DOJ no longer has any concern for either economic growth or the public good.

The United States is a successful nation because its free markets encourage firms to compete for customers by producing high-quality, low-cost goods. This system needs to be protected from monopolists who gain so much power that they can destroy the competitive nature of the markets in which they participate.

I urge all parties involved to reconsider the proposed settlement. Microsoft deserves more than a slap on the wrist for it's destructive abuse of it's monopoly power. More importantly, American consumers need to be protected against future abuses.

Thank you for your time,

Randall Walton