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Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

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The Associated Press

BENTON HARBOR, Mich. (AP) — Whirlpool Corp. has lost the latest round in its battle with competitors over imports from South Korea and Mexico.

The U.S. International Trade Commission found Tuesday that Whirlpool and other U.S. appliance makers were not harmed by competitors importing bottom-mount refrigerators from South Korea and Mexico.

Whirlpool filed a complaint last year that alleged competitors such as Samsung Electronics Co., LG Electronics Inc. and other foreign companies were violating international trade laws and "dumping" their appliances in the U.S. by selling them at less than fair value. The company asked U.S. regulators to impose extra duties on its competitors for these actions.

The U.S. Department of Commerce determined in March that the competitors were selling the products at less than fair value and issued a preliminary decision in Whirlpool's favor. That then went to the International Trade Commission for review, where the commissioners issued a unanimous decision against Whirlpool.

Whirlpool said it is reviewing the decision and determining whether it will appeal to the U.S. Court of International Trade, part of the federal court system.

Samsung and LG applauded the decision and criticized Whirlpool for launching a "baseless investigation" that was costly to U.S. taxpayers.

Whirlpool, based in Benton Harbor, Mich., makes appliances under its namesake brand as well as Maytag and KitchenAid. Its shares fell \$3.03, more than 4 percent, to close at \$68.

The Whirlpool decision was one of two by the trade commission on Tuesday that did not side with U.S. manufacturers. It also voted against imposing duties on certain steel wheels made in China.

U.S. wheel makers Accuride Corp. and Hayes Lemmerz International Inc. claimed that Chinese rivals were selling certain wheels at prices that violated trade laws, but the trade commission found the industry was not hurt by these practices and did not vote in the U.S. companies' favor. Representatives for the companies were not immediately available to comment.

Source URL (retrieved on 12/26/2014 - 9:07am):

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