

523H.6 Encroachment.

1. If a franchisor develops, or grants to a franchisee the right to develop, a new outlet or location which sells essentially the same goods or services under the same trademark, service mark, trade name, logotype, or other commercial symbol as an existing franchisee and the new outlet or location has an adverse effect on the gross sales of the existing franchisee's outlet or location, the existing adversely affected franchisee has a cause of action for monetary damages in an amount calculated pursuant to subsection 3, unless any of the following apply:

a. The franchisor has first offered the new outlet or location to the existing franchisee on the same basic terms and conditions available to the other potential franchisee, or, if the new outlet or location is to be owned by the franchisor, on the terms and conditions that would ordinarily be offered to a franchisee for a similarly situated outlet or location.

b. The adverse impact on the existing franchisee's annual gross sales, based on a comparison to the annual gross sales from the existing outlet or location during the twelve-month period immediately preceding the opening of the new outlet or location, is determined to have been less than five percent during the first twelve months of operation of the new outlet or location.

c. The existing franchisee, at the time the franchisor develops, or grants to a franchisee the right to develop, a new outlet or location, is not in compliance with the franchisor's then current reasonable criteria for eligibility for a new franchise. A franchisee determined to be ineligible pursuant to this paragraph shall be afforded the opportunity to seek compensation pursuant to the formal procedure established under paragraph "d", subparagraph (2). Such procedure shall be the franchisee's exclusive remedy.

d. The franchisor has established both of the following:

(1) A formal procedure for hearing and acting upon claims by an existing franchisee with regard to a decision by the franchisor to develop, or grant to a franchisee the right to develop, a new outlet or location, prior to the opening of the new outlet or location.

(2) A reasonable formal procedure for awarding compensation or other form of consideration to a franchisee to offset all or a portion of the franchisee's lost profits caused by the establishment of the new outlet or location. The procedure shall involve, at the option of the franchisee, one of the following:

(a) A panel, comprised of an equal number of members selected by the franchisee and the franchisor, and one additional member to be selected unanimously by the members selected by the franchisee and the franchisor.

(b) A neutral third-party mediator or an arbitrator with the authority to make a decision or award in accordance with the formal procedure. The procedure shall be deemed reasonable if approved by a majority of the franchisor's franchisees in the United States, either individually or by an elected representative body.

(c) Arbitration of any dispute before neutral arbitrators pursuant to the rules of the American arbitration association. The award of an arbitrator pursuant to this subparagraph division is subject to judicial review pursuant to chapter 679A.

2. A franchisor shall establish and make available to its franchisees a written policy setting forth its reasonable criteria to be used by the franchisor to determine whether an existing franchisee is eligible for a franchise for an additional outlet or location.

3. a. In establishing damages under a cause of action brought pursuant to this section, the franchisee has the burden of proving the amount of lost profits attributable to the compensable sales. In any action brought under this section, the damages payable shall be limited to no more than three years of the proven lost profits. For purposes of this subsection, "compensable sales" means the annual gross sales from the existing outlet or location during the twelve-month period immediately preceding the opening of the new outlet or location less both of the following:

(1) Five percent.

(2) The actual gross sales from the operation of the existing outlet or location for the twelve-month period immediately following the opening of the new outlet or location.

b. Compensable sales shall exclude any amount attributable to factors other than the opening and operation of the new outlet or location.

4. Any cause of action brought under this section must be filed within eighteen months of the opening of the new outlet or location or within three months after the completion of the procedure under subsection 1, paragraph “d”, subparagraph (2), whichever is later.

5. Upon petition by the franchisor or the franchisee, the district court may grant a permanent or preliminary injunction to prevent injury or threatened injury for a violation of this section or to preserve the status quo pending the outcome of the formal procedure under subsection 1, paragraph “d”, subparagraph (2).

92 Acts, ch 1134, §6; 95 Acts, ch 117, §3; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §263