

US to pursue suit against AT&T, T-Mobile deal: Holder

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Executives at AT&T attend a news conference where it was announced that AT&T Inc. will be buying its wireless rival T-Mobile, in New York City in March 2011. US Department of Justice lawyers "are ready and eager to go to court" in a bid to block AT&T's \$39 billion takeover of T-Mobile

US Department of Justice lawyers "are ready and eager to go to court" in a bid to block AT&T's \$39 billion takeover of T-Mobile, Attorney General Eric Holder assured lawmakers on Tuesday.

"The [Justice Department](#) does not file matters in court, does not file suits challenging proposed mergers unless we are prepared to follow them all the way through," Holder, who has recused himself from the lawsuit, told the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"There is a trial team -- I know about this just from what I've heard --

there is a trial team that is in place, and they are ready and eager to go to court," he told the panel.

Democratic Senator Herb Kohl had asked Holder about concern in some quarters that the Justice Department "might not be in this case for the long haul and agree to a settlement that would allow the merger to proceed."

In September, the Justice Department said the attorney generals of California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Washington had joined the suit it filed in US District Court in Washington in August.

The move was another setback for AT&T as it seeks to salvage the proposed takeover of T-Mobile USA, the US unit of Deutsche Telekom.

AT&T has submitted a defense of its takeover bid for T-Mobile to the [court](#), rejecting the Justice Department's assertion that the deal would be anti-competitive and claiming it would benefit consumers.

"Rather than substantially reducing competition, the combined firm will usher in more intense competition to an already vibrantly competitive market," AT&T said.

In the event the case goes to trial, the Justice Department has proposed that it begin on March 19, 2012. AT&T has proposed a January 16, 2012 trial date.

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