


US asbestos law firm defeats racketeering lawsuit by PVC pipe maker JM Eagle


By David Thomas

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Signage is seen at the law firm of Simmons Hanly Conroy in Manhattan, New York, U.S., September 17, 2020. REUTERS/Andrew Kelly [Purchase Licensing Rights](#) 

March 19 (Reuters) - A federal judge in Chicago has dismissed a [lawsuit](#) by plastic pipe maker JM Eagle against a U.S. law firm that filed hundreds of asbestos personal injury cases against it.

JM Eagle failed to show that law firm Simmons Hanly Conroy and the asbestos plaintiffs, witnesses and other groups the firm works with were operating as an enterprise under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, U.S. District Judge Robert Gettleman [said](#)  in his Tuesday ruling.

With the two federal RICO counts dismissed, Gettleman said he was also dismissing JM Eagle's remaining state law claims against the law firm.

JM Eagle and its attorneys at Steptoe LLP did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Simmons Hanly in a statement praised the decision for dismissing what it called a "baseless and retaliatory" lawsuit. The firm said it would "not be intimidated by unwarranted legal attacks designed to smear its reputation and derail its pursuit of justice for victims of asbestos exposure."

JM Eagle, which calls itself the world's largest plastic and PVC pipe manufacturer, was previously known as J-M Manufacturing. The company said it sold "a limited amount" of cement pipes that contained asbestos from 1983 to 1988.

JM Eagle had accused Simmons Hanly of suppressing evidence, using perjured or falsified testimony and statements, and committing fraud in the course of recovering billions of dollars from asbestos defendants in thousands of cases.

The plastic pipe maker said Simmons Hanly has filed more than 430 cases against JM Eagle since 2001, with more than 75 of them settling. The law firm's website said Tuesday it has recovered more than \$10.2 billion from defendants in asbestos cases nationwide.

Reporting by David Thomas