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Sharp Files LCD Patent Infringement Lawsuits against AUO

On January 24, 2011 (US Time), Sharp Corporation (hereinafter “Sharp”) filed a complaint with the US International Trade Commission (hereinafter “ITC”) against Taiwanese company AU Optronics Corporation (hereinafter ”AUO”; Head Office: No. 1, Li-Hsin Road 2, Hsinchu Science Park, Hsinchu, Taiwan, R.O.C.) and certain customers of AUO that manufacture LCD TVs and LCD monitors. Sharp also filed a lawsuit against AUO at the United States District Court for Delaware. Sharp intends to file additional lawsuits in the event it confirms that other products incorporating AUO’s LCD panels or LCD modules infringe its patents.

In the two complaints, Sharp alleges that the LCD panels and LCD modules manufactured by AUO, and any LCD televisions and LCD monitors sold by AUO’s customers in the US that use these LCD panels and LCD modules, infringe upon certain patents* owned by Sharp which relate to LCD technology. At the ITC, Sharp seeks an order prohibiting imports and sales of these products in the US. At the US District Court for Delaware, in addition to this, Sharp seeks compensatory damages with AUO as the only defendant.

Sharp has contributed to the development of the liquid crystal industry as a leading company, including starting research and development in liquid crystal technology in 1970, producing the world's first application of LCD displays in calculators in 1973, and starting production of large-size LCD television in 2004 at its Kameyama plant in Japan. As a result of its extensive research efforts, Sharp holds numerous LCD-related patents in Japan, the United States and other major countries, and licenses its patents for certain LCD technologies to LCD panel manufacturers.

* Seven U.S. Patents Owned by Sharp Corporation Asserted in the Lawsuit and Investigation:
- US Patent No. 6,879,364 which relates to a liquid crystal display apparatus for controlling alignment of the liquid crystal in order to improve viewing characteristics.
- US Patent No. 6,937,300 which relates to a method of fabricating a liquid crystal display device including a pixel electrode having fine slits.
- US Patent No. 7,057,689 which relates to a liquid crystal display device having a phase compensation element to achieve a wide viewing angle.
- US Patent No. 7,283,192 which generally relates to an LCD device having a wide viewing angle.
- US Patent No. 7,304,626 which includes circuitry that may be advantageous in that flickering or the like may be reduced and display characteristics improved.
- US Patent No. 7,532,183 which relates to an LCD device and its drive method, and in particular to a driving technique which improves the response time to achieve better picture quality.
- US Patent No. 7,838,881 which generally relates to an active matrix substrate for use in connection with a display device such as a liquid crystal display.