

TreeHouse Foods Sues Green Mountain Coffee

OAK BROOK, Ill. (AP) — TreeHouse Foods Inc. said Tuesday it is suing [Green Mountain Coffee Roasters Inc.](#) [1], claiming the maker of the Keurig brewer has a monopoly on the cups used in single-serve brewing systems.

The lawsuit was filed by the Oak Brook, Ill., company in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

[TreeHouse](#) [2] argues that Green Mountain's agreements with various suppliers and distributors are designed to give the company monopoly power in the cup market following the expiration of some of its patents. The food and beverage company also said that a new version of the Keurig brewer, expected to be launched later this year, will have an "anticompetitive lock-out technology" that will prevent the new brewers from functioning with cups supplied by unlicensed competitors.

Green Mountain spokeswoman Suzanne DuLong said in a statement that the company believes the lawsuit is without merit and plans to defend itself vigorously.

Green Mountain's Keurig system uses single-serve portions, known as pods, portion packs or K-cups, filled with coffee or other ingredients to make drinks.

TreeHouse says Green Mountain's actions are an attempt to eliminate consumer choice and coerce brewer owners into purchasing only Green Mountain-owned or licensed K-cups. It also says that Green Mountain plans to eliminate the current lineup of K-cup brewers, which function with other manufacturers' cups, to exclude competition and force consumers to purchase higher-priced Green Mountain cups.

TreeHouse is seeking an unspecified award for punitive damages, as well as expenses. The company owns Bay Valley, which sells retailers portion packs used in single-serve brewers. It also owns Sturm Foods, which sells products under private label brands, including its "Grove Square" compatible cups.

Shares of TreeHouse rose 10 cents to close at \$64.09 and were unchanged in after-hours trading following the announcement. Shares of Waterbury, Vt.-based Green Mountain added \$8.48 to close at \$119.40 and added 10 cents in extended trading.

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