

Leading Plaintiff Settles in Quiznos Lawsuits

BY BETH EWEN



"The snake has lost its head." That's the way Ric Cohen characterized the latest development in ongoing Quiznos litigation. Franchisee Keith Rentschler, one of 13 plaintiffs, has agreed to settle, Cohen said, and the agreement calls for neither party to pay damages.

Cohen, a partner at Cheng Cohen in Chicago, is Quiznos outside counsel, and he's been battling since February against as many as 13 franchisee plaintiff groups suing the Denver-based sandwich chain for an alleged "fraudulent scheme," resulting in "stealing hundreds of millions of dollars in kickbacks and royalties" and leaving franchisees "in financial ruin," according to one of the complaints.

Rentschler, who was the head of Quiznos Franchisee Association formed as part of a class-action settlement by Quiznos in 2010, operated a half-dozen Quiznos sub shops in St. Louis, Missouri. Cohen called Rentschler a "sophisticated business person" who was "influential in the post-class action period."

"I see it as a declaration of one of the more thoughtful and insightful folks of the group saying this is silly," Cohen said, adding that Rentschler is "moving on. Hopefully the others will take the cue."

Reached by phone, Rentschler declined to comment. "I can't talk about it, no," he said.

Cohen said the settlement agreement was signed Nov. 13 and a dismissal notice will be filed this week. "This is a happy development for Quiznos," Cohen said.