§ 794.115 "Independently owned."

Ownership of the enterprise may be vested in an individual petroleum jobber, or a partnership, or a corporation, so long as such ownership is not shared by a major oil company, or other producer, refiner, distributor or supplier of petroleum products, so as to affect the independent ownership of the enterprise. As noted in §794.114, an enterprise will not be considered independently owned where it does not own its own office, bulk storage, and delivery facilities. The enterprise may also not be considered "independently owned" where it does not own its stock-in-trade. (See Wirtz v. Lunsford, 404 F.2d 693 (C.A. 6).) It is recognized that, in the ordinary course of business dealings, an independently owned enterprise may purchase its goods on credit and this, of course, will not affect its characterization as being "independently owned" within the meaning of the exemption. However, there may well be a question as to whether the enterprise is "independently owned" where the enterprise receives its petroleum products on consignment and the supplier lays claim to the ownership of the account receivable. Of possible relevance also is the intent evident in the statutory language to provide exemption only for an enterprise which can meet the specified tests which depend on "the sales of such enterprise." The determination in such cases, as in other cases involving questions of independent ownership, will necessarily depend on all the facts.

§ 794.116 "Independently * * * controlled."

As explained in §794.114, the enterprise in addition to being independently owned must also be "independently controlled." The test here is whether the individual, partnership, or corporation which owns the enterprise also controls the enterprise as an independent businessman, free of control by any so-called major oil company or other person engaged in the petroleum business. Control by others may be evidenced by ownership; but control may exist in the absence of any ownership. For example where an enterprise engaged in the wholesale or bulk distribution of petroleum products enters into franchise or other arrangements which have the effect of restricting the products it distributes, the prices it may charge, or otherwise controlling the activities of the enterprise in those respects which are the common attributes of an independent businessman, these facts may establish that the enterprise is not "independently controlled" as required by the exemption under section 7(b)(3). (Wirtz v. Lunsford, 404 F. 2d 693 (C.A. 6).)

§ 794.117 Effect of franchises and other arrangements.

Whether a franchise or other contractual arrangement affects the status of the enterprise as "an independently owned and controlled * * * enterprise," depends upon all the facts including the terms of the agreements and arrangements between the parties as well as the other relationships that have been established. The term "franchise"
§ 794.120 Meaning of “annual gross volume of sales.”

The annual gross volume of sales of an enterprise consists of its gross receipts from all types of sales during a 12-month period (§ 794.122). The gross volume derived from all sales transactions is included, and will embrace among other things receipts from service, credit, or similar charges. However, credits for goods returned or exchanged (as distinguished from “trade-ins”), rebates, discounts, and the like result in creating a larger enterprise, rests with the courts.

§ 794.118 Effect of unrelated activities.

The term “independently owned and controlled” has reference to independence of ownership and control by others. Accordingly, the fact that the petroleum jobber may himself engage in other businesses which are not related to the enterprise engaged in the wholesale or bulk distribution of petroleum products, will not affect the question whether the petroleum enterprise is independently owned or controlled. For example, the fact that the wholesale or bulk petroleum distributor also owns or controls a wholly separate tourist lodge enterprise or job printing business will not affect the status of his enterprise engaged in the wholesale or bulk distribution of petroleum products as an “independently controlled” enterprise.