

'B Corporation' New Seasons Market will now be part of a subsidiary of a Korean retail conglomerate

New Seasons Market—the “B corporation” that paid union-busting consultants at least \$325,000 to quell a 2017 union campaign—is being sold to a South Korean retail giant for an undisclosed sum, the company announced Dec. 10.

Endeavour Capital, New Seasons Market's private equity owner, had long been rumored to be looking for a buyer. The new owner is Good Food Holdings, which was bought last year by South Korea's largest retailer Emart, itself a part of The Shinsegae Group retail conglomerate.

Good Food Holdings owns the Seattle-based Metropolitan Market grocery chain and the California grocery chains Bristol

Farms and Lazy Acres Natural Market. Metropolitan Market workers are represented by grocery union UFCW Local 21. New Seasons' Seattle-area store on Mercer Island will be converted to a Metropolitan Market, its Ballard neighborhood store will close, and its plans for a new location in Seattle's Central District will be scrapped. New Seasons' plans to expand to Seattle faced stiff opposition from Local 21, which viewed it as an anti-union outsider trying to come into a well-established and heavily unionized grocery sector.

In the eyes of Portland-area union supporters, New Seasons' ballyhooed “B Corp” status proved pretty worthless when

workers tried to unionize in 2017. B Corp is a trademarked label signifying that a company meets high standards of social and environmental performance—based on company answers to an online questionnaire ... and an annual fee paid to accrediting entity B Lab. But when the union effort launched, New Seasons fired several union supporters; hired the same union-busting consultant that fought union campaigns at Trump Hotel Las Vegas, American Apparel, and window maker Jeld-Wen; and held store-by-store anti-union meetings. The union effort fizzled in the wake of the anti-union campaign.

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