

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: DOLLY COLBY
212-878-2144

**PHILIP MORRIS STATEMENT
ON CASTANO RULING**

NEW ORLEANS, June 23 -- Today's ruling in the *Castano* case modifies the Court's previously entered class-wide stay of discovery order only to the extent that limited discovery will be permitted in the cases of the three named plaintiffs and must be "narrowly tailored" to those individuals. No depositions are permitted except in very limited circumstances.

Otherwise, Judge Jones's class-wide stay of discovery remains in effect pending a decision by the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on whether it will review the *Castano* class certification. The Fifth Circuit is expected to decide soon whether it will accept the appeal. Should the appeals court take the case, Philip Morris and the other defendants will ask the Fifth Circuit to decertify the class.

"This class certification question is of crucial importance because it will affect the remainder of the proceedings," said Charles R. Wall, senior vice president and deputy general counsel for Philip Morris. "We believe the Court of Appeals should, and will, agree to hear the appeal of Judge Jones's class certification order."

#

2047766713