

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Impossible Foods Inc. v. Impossible X LLC

Impossible Foods · No. 21-cv-02419-BLF · Decided September 17, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California grants two administrative motions to seal materials related to an opposition to Impossible Foods Inc.'s motion for partial summary judgment. The court applies the compelling-reasons standard and finds that the materials contain confidential financial information, business strategies, and other information whose disclosure could cause competitive harm. The court also orders the parties to refile public versions with narrower redactions or renew their sealing motions by September 29, 2025.

OPINION

1 2 3 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 4 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA 5
SAN JOSE DIVISION 6 7 IMPOSSIBLE FOODS INC., Case No. 21-cv-02419-BLF 8 Plaintiff,
ORDER REGARDING IMPOSSIBLE 9 v. LLC'S ADMINISTRATIVE MOTIONS 10
IMPOSSIBLE X LLC, et al., [Re: ECF Nos. 278, 279] 11 Defendants. 12 13 Before the Court are
two administrative motions: 14 1. Impossible X LLC's Administrative Motion to Seal.

ECF No. 278. 15 2. Impossible X LLC's Administrative Motion to Consider Whether Another
Party's Material 16 Should Be Sealed. ECF No. 279. 17 For the reasons described below, the
Court rules as follows: the administrative motion at 18 ECF No. 278 is GRANTED, and the
administrative motion at ECF No. 279 is GRANTED. 19 I. LEGAL STANDARD 20
“Historically, courts have recognized a ‘general right to inspect and copy public records 21 and
documents, including judicial records and documents.’” *Kamakana v. City & Cnty. of* 22
Honolulu, 447 F.3d 1172, 1178 (9th Cir.

2006) (quoting *Nixon v. Warner Commc'ns, Inc.*, 435 23 U.S. 589, 597 & n.7 (1978)).
Consequently, access to motions and their attachments that are 24 “more than tangentially related
to the merits of a case” may be sealed only upon a showing of 25 “compelling reasons” for
sealing. *Ctr. for Auto Safety v. Chrysler Grp., LLC*, 809 F.3d 1092, 26 1101–02 (9th Cir.

2016). Filings that are only tangentially related to the merits may be sealed 27 upon a lesser
showing of “good cause.” *Id.* at 1097. 1 Rule 79-5. That rule requires, inter alia, the moving party
to provide “the reasons for keeping a 2 document under seal, including an explanation of: (i) the
legitimate private or public interests that 3 warrant sealing; (ii) the injury that will result if sealing
is denied; and (iii) why a less restrictive 4 alternative to sealing is not sufficient.” Civ.

L.R. 79-5(c)(1). Civil Local Rule 79-5 requires the moving party to provide “evidentiary support from declarations where necessary.” Civ. L.R. 79- 6 5(c)(2). And the proposed order must be “narrowly tailored to seal only the sealable material.” 7 Civ. L.R. 79-5(c)(3). 8 Further, when a party seeks to seal a document because it has been designated as 9 confidential by another party, the filing party must file an Administrative Motion to Consider 10 Whether Another Party’s Material Should be Sealed.

Civ. L.R. 79-5(f). In that case, the filing 11 party need not satisfy the requirements of subsection (c)(1). Civ. L.R. 79-5(f)(1). Instead, the 12 party who designated the material as confidential must, within seven days of the motion’s filing, 13 file a statement and/or declaration that meets the requirements of subsection (c)(1). Civ. L.R. 79- 14 5(f)(3).

A designating party’s failure to file a statement or declaration may result in the unsealing 15 of the provisionally sealed document without further notice to the designating party. Id. Any 16 party can file a response to that declaration within four days. Civ. L.R. 79-5(f)(4). 17 II. DISCUSSION 18 A. ECF No. 278 19 Defendants Impossible LLC and Joel Runyon (collectively, “Defendants” or “ILLC”) seek 20 to seal portions of its Opposition to Plaintiff Impossible Foods Inc.’s (“Plaintiff” or “Impossible 21 Foods”) Motion for Partial Summary Judgment.

ECF No. 278 at 1–2. Plaintiff did not submit any 22 response. 23 ILLC asserts that the information it seeks to seal pertains to “its business and financial 24 decision making strategies.” Id. at 1. Defendants argue that the disclosure of this information 25 would “reveal critical business information” to the market that would cause “substantial harm” to 26 ILLC’s competitive standing.

Id. at 1–2. 27 As the sealing request relates to an opposition to a motion for partial summary judgment, 1 Court will apply the “compelling reasons” standard. Ctr. for Auto Safety, 809 F.3d at 1099–101. 2 The Court finds that compelling reasons exist to seal the materials ILLC identifies.

The 3 “compelling reasons” standard is met for confidential business information that would harm a 4 party’s competitive standing if publicly disclosed, including materials discussing “internal 5 business and financial decision-making strategies.” See Laatz v. Zazzle, Inc, No. 22-cv-04844, 6 2023 WL 4983670, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 3, 2023); Jam Cellars, Inc. v. Wine Grp.

LLC, No. 19- 7 cv-01878, 2020 WL 5576346, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 17, 2020) (finding compelling reasons for 8 sealing “confidential business and proprietary information”); Fed. Trade Comm’n v. Qualcomm 9 Inc., No. 17-cv-00220, 2019 WL 95922, at *3 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 3, 2019) (finding compelling 10 reasons to seal “information that, if published, may harm... competitive standing and divulges 11 terms of confidential contracts, contract negotiations, or trade secrets”); In re Elec.

Arts, Inc., 298 F. App'x 568, 569 (9th Cir. 2008) (finding sealable "business information that might harm a litigant's competitive standing"). The Court also finds that the request is narrowly tailored. See Civ. L.R. 79-5(c)(3). The Court's ruling is summarized below: Public ECF Document Portion(s) Requested to Seal Ruling No. / Sealed ECF.

No. 277 / 278-2 Defendants' Highlighted portions at GRANTED as containing Opposition to 3:13; 8:26; 9:3-4, 6-9. sensitive information Plaintiff's Motion for regarding ILLC's financial Partial Summary information, the release of Judgment which could cause ILLC competitive harm. B. ECF No. 279 ILLC filed an Administrative Motion to Consider Whether Another Party's Material Should be Sealed.

ECF No. 279. Impossible Foods filed a statement in support of sealing the materials identified in Plaintiff's motion. ECF No. 280. ILLC did not submit any response to Plaintiff's statement in support of sealing. Impossible Foods asserts that this information pertains to "financial information, including revenue and expenditures, and marketing strategies." Id. at 2.

Plaintiff argues that public disclosure of this information "would cause substantial harm to Impossible Foods's relative to its competitors and future business partners." Id. at 3. As the sealing request relates to an opposition to a motion for partial summary judgment, which the Court finds is "more than tangentially related to the underlying cause[s] of action," the Court will apply the "compelling reasons" standard.

Ctr. for Auto Safety, 809 F.3d at 1099–101. The Court finds that Plaintiffs have established compelling reasons to seal the identified materials. The "compelling reasons" standard is met for confidential business information that would harm a party's competitive standing if publicly disclosed, including materials discussing "internal business and financial decision-making strategies." See *Laatz v. Zazzle, Inc.*, No. 22-cv- 10 04844, 2023 WL 4983670, at *2 (N.D.

Cal. Aug. 3, 2023); *Jam Cellars, Inc. v. Wine Grp. LLC*, No. 19-cv-01878, 2020 WL 5576346, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 17, 2020) (finding compelling reasons for sealing "confidential business and proprietary information"); *Fed. Trade Comm'n v. Qualcomm Inc.*, No. 17-cv-00220, 2019 WL 95922, at *3 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 3, 2019) (finding compelling reasons to seal "information that, if published, may harm... competitive standing and divulges terms of confidential contracts, contract negotiations, or trade secrets"); *In re Elec.*

Arts, Inc., 298 F. App'x 568, 569 (9th Cir. 2008) (finding sealable "business information that might harm a litigant's competitive standing"). The Court also finds that the request is narrowly tailored. See Civ. L.R. 79-5(c)(3). The Court's ruling is summarized below: Public ECF Document Portion(s) Requested to Seal Ruling No. / Sealed ECF No. 277 / 279-2 Defendants' Highlighted portions at GRANTED as containing Opposition to 4:17-19, 21-26, 28; 5:1-4, discussions of sensitive Plaintiff's Motion for 11-13, 19-22, 24, 26; 6:7-8; business

strategy and Partial Summary 21:9; 23:26-28; 24:1-2. financial information, the 24 Judgment release of which could cause 25 Impossible Foods harm.

26 27 I 277-3 / Ex. 2 to Declaration | Entire document. GRANTED as containing 279-3 of Adam S. Cashman discussions of sensitive 2 business strategy and financial information, the 3 release of which could cause 4 Impossible Foods harm. 5 6 I. ORDER For the foregoing reasons, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that: 4 1.

The motion at ECF No. 278 is GRANTED. 8 2. The motion at ECF No. 279 is GRANTED. 9 The parties SHALL refile public versions of each filing where the redactions and sealing 10 granted by the Court are narrower than what was redacted in the current public versions by 11 September 29, 2025, unless they are filing a renewed sealing motion for any document in that 12 filing.

13 v 14 IT IS SO ORDERED. 15 16 Dated: September 17, 2025 = 17 fainflaman 2 18 TH LABSON FREEMAN 19 United States District Judge 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28