

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

TEEC Angel Management, LLC, et al. v. Tsingyuan Ventures LLC, et
al.

TEEC Angel Management · No. 24-cv-08991-EKL (VKD) · Decided January 15, 2026

SUMMARY

The court resolves a discovery dispute concerning identical document subpoenas served by plaintiffs on at least 39 limited partners of defendants’ investment fund. It quashes the subpoenas as to requests for documents available from defendants, but defers responses to two requests seeking non-parties’ analyses and decisions to invest until resolution of a pending motion for partial summary judgment. The court declines to quash the subpoenas on the basis of alleged harassment or embarrassment.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Virginia K. DeMarchi
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	January 15, 2026
DOCKET	24-cv-08991-EKL (VKD)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The parties and nonparties sought resolution of a discovery dispute concerning plaintiffs' document subpoenas to at least 39 limited partners of defendants' investment fund. Defendants and nonparties moved to quash the subpoenas.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court evaluated the subpoenas under the relevance and proportionality limits of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26 and the undue-burden requirements of Rule 45.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished, nonprecedential district-court order

TOPICS

- discovery dispute
- civil procedure
- commercial litigation

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the subpoenas should be quashed or modified because requests for documents available from defendants impose an undue burden on nonparties.
2. Whether requests for nonparties' analyses of and decisions to invest in defendants' fund were relevant and proportional to the needs of the case.
3. Whether the subpoenas were served for an improper purpose, including harassment or embarrassment.

HOLDINGS

1. The subpoenas were quashed to the extent they sought documents responsive to RFPs 3 through 7 because those documents should be available from defendants in the first instance.
2. The court did not quash the subpoenas as to RFPs 1 and 2, but nonparties were not required to respond to those requests until the presiding judge decided the pending motion for partial summary judgment.
3. The court declined to quash the subpoenas on the ground that plaintiffs served them to harass or embarrass defendants or nonparties.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"There is simply no reason to burden nonparties when the documents sought are in possession of the party defendant." (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiffs served identical document subpoenas on at least 39 limited partners in defendants' investment fund. The subpoenas sought seven broadly drafted categories of documents, including documents sent to or received from defendants and documents concerning nonparties' analyses of and decisions to invest in defendants' fund. Plaintiffs had not moved to compel defendants' own production or identified any category of documents unavailable from defendants.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs served identical document subpoenas on nonparties seeking seven categories of documents. Defendants and nonparties moved to quash based on improper purpose, undue burden, and the availability of the documents from defendants. After oral argument, the magistrate judge partially quashed the subpoenas and deferred responses to the remaining requests pending resolution of a motion for partial summary judgment.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Nidec Corp. v. Victor Co. of Japan, 249 F.R.D. 575, 577 (N.D. Cal. 2007)

- LegalZoom.com v. Rocket Law, Inc., No. 12-cv-00942 GAF, 2015 WL 12832823, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Mar. 23, 2015)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 5 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA 6
SAN JOSE DIVISION 7 8 TEEC ANGEL MANAGEMENT, LLC, et Case No. 24-cv-08991-EKL
(VKD) al., 9 Plaintiffs, ORDER RE NOVEMBER 17, 2025 10 DISCOVERY DISPUTE RE
NON- v. PARTY SUBPOENAS 11 TSINGYUAN VENTURES LLC, et al., Re: Dkt. No. 90 12
Defendants. 13 14 Plaintiffs TEEC Angel Management, LLC, TEEC Angel Fund IV, LLC, and
TSVC Fund 15 V, LLC (“Plaintiffs”) and defendants Tsingyuan Ventures LLC, Tsingyuan
Ventures I GP LLC, 16 Tsingyuan Ventures II GP LLC, and Foothill Ventures III GP LLC
 (“Defendants”), together with 17 39 unidentified non-parties (“Non-Parties”), ask the Court to
resolve a dispute concerning 18 Plaintiffs’ document subpoenas to Non-Parties.

Dkt. No. 90. The Court heard oral argument on 19 this dispute on January 13, 2026. Dkt. No. 98.
20 At issue are identical document subpoenas that Plaintiffs have served on at least 39 limited 21
partners in Defendants’ investment fund. Dkt. No. 90 at 1; Dkt. No. 90-1.

The subpoenas seek 22 the same seven categories of documents. See Dkt. No. 90-1 at ECF 10-11.
Defendants and Non- 23 Parties move to quash the subpoenas, arguing that Plaintiffs should not be
permitted to obtain 24 responsive documents from Non-Parties because (1) Plaintiffs seek the
discovery for an improper 25 purpose, (2) the subpoenas unduly burden Non-Parties, and (3)
Plaintiffs should first seek 26 responsive documents from Defendants.

Dkt. No. 90 at 2-4. Plaintiffs respond that the subpoenas 27 seek only a “limited production” of
documents and “most if not all” require the production of 1 possession.” Id. at 5.1 According to
the current case schedule, the deadline for completion of fact 2 discovery is August 3, 2026. Dkt.
No. 92. 3 The scope of discovery available by document subpoena under Rule 45 of the Federal 4
Rules of Civil Procedure is the same as the scope of discovery available under Rule 34.

See Fed. 5 R. Civ. P. 45, advisory committee’s note to 1970 amendment (noting that “the scope of
discovery 6 through a subpoena is the same as that applicable to Rule 34 and the other discovery
rules”). A 7 party may obtain discovery of any non-privileged matter that is relevant to a party’s
claim or 8 defense in the action, so long as that discovery is also proportional to the needs of the
case.

Fed. 9 R. Civ. P. 26(b)(1). However, Rule 45 also requires “[a] party or attorney responsible for
issuing 10 and serving a subpoena [to] take reasonable steps to avoid imposing undue burden or
expense on a 11 person subject to the subpoena,” and instructs that “the court for the district where
compliance is 12 required must quash or modify a subpoena that... subjects a person to undue
burden.” Fed.

R. 13 Civ. P. 45(d)(1), (3)(A)(iv). Additionally, Rule 26 provides that the court must limit discovery 14 that is “unreasonably cumulative or duplicative, or can be obtained from some other source that is 15 more convenient, less burdensome, or less expensive.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(b)(2)(C) (i). 16 None of Plaintiffs’ document requests can fairly be described as seeking a “limited” 17 production of documents from Non-Parties.

All are broadly drafted to encompass “all documents 18 or communications” regarding more specifically defined subject matter, and the requested 19 production is not limited by date. More importantly, contrary to Plaintiffs’ representations, all but 20 two of the document requests ask Non-Parties to produce documents that ought to be available 21 from Defendants in the first instance.

See Dkt. No. 90-1 at ECF 10-11 (RFPs 3-7, requesting 22 documents sent to or received from Defendants). Although Plaintiffs criticize the nature and 23 extent of Defendants’ document production to date, Plaintiffs have not taken steps to compel 24 Defendants’ production of documents in their possession, nor do Plaintiffs identify any category 25 of documents that they cannot obtain from Defendants directly. “There is simply no reason to 26 1 Plaintiffs also argued that some Non-Parties had not timely objected to the subpoenas at issue.

27 Dkt. No. 90 at 5. However, at the hearing, Plaintiffs clarified that they do not contend that any of 1 burden nonparties when the documents sought are in possession of the party defendant.” *Nidec 2 Corp. v. Victor Co. of Japan*, 249 F.R.D. 575, 577 (N.D. Cal. 2007) (quashing subpoena to non- 3 party where documents requested were in possession of party); see also *LegalZoom.com v. Rocket 4 Law*.

Inc., No. 12-cv-00942 GAF, 2015 WL 12832823, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Mar. 23, 2015) (denying 5 motion to compel on same ground). 6 Only two requests, RFPs 1 and 2, appear to seek documents that are likely to be within 7 Non-Parties’ possession, and not Defendants’ possession. See Dkt. No. 90-1 at ECF 10 8 (requesting documents regarding Non-Parties’ analysis of and decision to invest in Defendants’ 9 fund).

Plaintiffs do not explain in the joint discovery dispute letter why they seek documents 10 responsive to RFPs 1 and 2 or how such documents are relevant to a claim or defense in this case. 11 See Dkt. No. 90 at 5. At the hearing, Plaintiffs offered that the requested documents may be 12 relevant to issues of reliance, causation, and damages.

However, even crediting that belated 13 argument, RFPs 1 and 2 are overbroad and seek discovery that is not proportional to the needs of 14 the case. 15 For these reasons, the Court quashes the subpoenas served on Non-Parties to the extent 16 those subpoenas seek documents responsive to RFPs 3-7, as this discovery is presumptively 17 available from Defendants.

The Court does not quash the subpoenas with respect to RFPs 1 and 2; 18 however, Non-Parties are not required to respond to RFPs 1 and 2 until the presiding judge 19 decides the pending motion for partial summary judgment. At the very least, resolution of that 20 motion appears likely to impact the scope of relevant production responsive to these requests.

The 21 Court expects that, following resolution of the motion, the scope of RFPs 1 and 2 will be modified 22 by agreement, or if necessary, by the Court,2 without the need to re-serve the subpoenas. 23 On the present record, the Court does not find that Plaintiffs served the subpoenas in order 24 to harass or embarrass Defendants and/or Non-Parties, and the Court does not quash the subpoenas 25 on that basis.

26 27 2 If there is no agreement on the proper scope of RFPs 1 and 2, the parties and non-parties may 1 IT IS SO ORDERED. 2 || Dated: January 15, 2026 3 4 Virginia K. DeMarchi 5 United States Magistrate Judge 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 15 16 = 17 Z 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28