

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Mashid Wadea v. Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC

Wadea · No. 24-cv-1587-JLS-DDL · Decided January 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of California denied Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC’s renewed motion to file Exhibits 5 and 6 under seal. Applying the good-cause standard, the Court found that Mercedes-Benz had not made a particularized showing of specific prejudice or harm from disclosure. The Court ordered Plaintiff to file the exhibits without redactions within 10 days.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of California
DECIDED	January 16, 2026
DOCKET	24-cv-1587-JLS-DDL
DISPOSITION	denied
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant moved to file under seal Exhibits 5 and 6 to Plaintiff's opposition to Defendant's motion for a protective order. The court denied the renewed sealing motion and ordered Plaintiff to file the response and exhibits without redactions.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Requests to seal judicial records are evaluated under a strong presumption of public access. Depending on the relationship of the underlying motion to the merits, the movant must show either compelling reasons or, for matters only tangentially related to the merits such as discovery motions, good cause supported by a particularized showing of specific prejudice or harm.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- discovery dispute
- commercial litigation
- commercial

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- commercial litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Defendant established good cause to seal redacted versions of Exhibits 5 and 6 containing purportedly confidential business information.
2. Whether the court should order Plaintiff to file the response and Exhibits 5 and 6 on the public docket without redactions.

HOLDINGS

1. Defendant failed to establish good cause to seal any portion of Exhibits 5 and 6 because it did not make a particularized showing that specific prejudice or harm would result from public disclosure.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The public enjoys “a general right to inspect and copy public records and documents, including judicial records and documents.”” (at 1)

“Although less demanding than the “compelling reasons” standard, “good cause” nevertheless requires a “particularized showing that specific prejudice or harm will result” if the information is disclosed.” (at 2)

“Defendant’s assertion that disclosure could be used by its vendors and competitors to their advantage is broad and speculative, as is its argument that disclosure would chill communications or harm dealer relationships.” (at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The exhibits were email communications between Mercedes-Benz employees concerning entities evaluating tire and wheel performance and warranty data, an analysis of consumer complaints, and a tire issue reported by an unnamed customer. Mercedes-Benz argued that disclosure could reveal business operations, affect competitive standing, influence vendor negotiations, chill dealer communications, and harm dealer relationships. The court found those assertions broad, speculative, and unsupported by a concrete explanation of how disclosure of the particular information would cause specific harm.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff initially moved to seal Exhibits 5 and 6 in their entirety. The court denied that motion without prejudice because portions of the exhibits were clearly not confidential and allowed Defendant to propose redactions. Defendant then renewed its motion to seal the exhibits, and the court denied the renewed motion for failure to establish good cause.

DISPOSITION

denied

CASES CITED

- Nixon v. Warner Communications, Inc., 435 U.S. 589, 597 (1978)
- Center for Auto Safety v. Chrysler Group, LLC, 809 F.3d 1092, 1096-97 (9th Cir. 2016)

- *Kamakana v. City & County of Honolulu*, 447 F.3d 1172, 1178 (9th Cir. 2006)
- *Phillips ex rel. Estates of Byrd v. General Motors Corp.*, 307 F.3d 1206, 1210-11 (9th Cir. 2002)
- *Beckman Industries, Inc. v. International Insurance Co.*, 966 F.2d 470, 476 (9th Cir. 1992)
- *Grano v. Sodexo Management, Inc.*, No. 18-cv-1818-RSH-BLM, 2022 WL 3371621, at *2 (S.D. Cal. Aug. 16, 2022)
- *Vasquez v. O'Reilly Auto Enterprises, LLC*, No. 1:21-CV-01099-DAD-SAB, 2022 WL 1645145, at *4 (E.D. Cal. May 24, 2022)

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