

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Judy West, et al. v. Ford Motor Company, et al.

West · No. 1:25-cv-01266-KES-CDB · Decided January 8, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California ordered counsel for Plaintiffs Judy West and Paula West-Moore to show cause in writing why sanctions should not be imposed for failing to timely appear at a mandatory scheduling conference. The order also directed Plaintiffs’ counsel to meet and confer with defense counsel and propose dates to reconvene the scheduling conference, warning that noncompliance could result in sanctions up to and including a recommendation to dismiss the case.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	January 8, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-cv-01266-KES-CDB
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	After Defendants removed the action from the Kern County Superior Court, the district court convened an initial scheduling conference. Plaintiffs' counsel failed to appear timely, and the court issued an order requiring counsel to show cause in writing why sanctions should not be imposed.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

TOPICS

- sanctions
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- sanctions

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiffs' counsel's failure to timely appear at the mandatory scheduling conference warranted an order to show cause regarding possible sanctions.
2. Whether the court had authority under Local Rule 110 and its inherent docket-management power to consider sanctions for failure to comply with a court order.

HOLDINGS

1. The district court may impose sanctions, where appropriate, for counsel's or a party's failure to comply with the court's rules or orders, pursuant to Local Rule 110 and the court's inherent power to control its docket.
2. Counsel for Plaintiffs was required to show cause in writing by January 12, 2026, why sanctions should not be imposed for failure to obey the court's scheduling-conference order.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Court has the inherent power to control its docket and may, in the exercise of that power, impose sanctions where appropriate.” (at 2)

“Failure to comply with this order to show cause may result in the imposition of sanctions, up to and including a recommendation to dismiss the case.” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The court had ordered the parties to attend a mandatory scheduling conference by Zoom and had provided connection information in advance. Defendants' counsel appeared on time, but Plaintiffs did not timely appear personally or through noticed counsel. An attorney who was not listed as counsel eventually joined after a five-minute wait, experienced technical difficulties, and explained that she was covering for attorneys occupied with an unrelated trial and had only recently received the access link. The court found the explanation unsatisfactory and recessed the conference.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed the complaint in Kern County Superior Court on September 11, 2023. Ford removed the action to the Eastern District of California on September 23, 2025. The district court set an initial scheduling conference for January 8, 2026; Plaintiffs' counsel appeared late and unprepared after the conference began, prompting the court to issue this show-cause order.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Bautista v. Los Angeles County*, 216 F.3d 837, 841 (9th Cir. 2000)

OPINION

West

PER CURIAM.

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

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EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

9 10 JUDY WEST, et al., Case No. 1:25-cv-01266-KES-CDB 11 Plaintiffs, ORDER REQUIRING
COUNSEL FOR

PLAINTIFFS TO SHOW CAUSE IN

12

v. WRITING WHY SANCTIONS SHOULD

13 NOT BE IMPOSED FOR FAILURE TO

FORD MOTOR COMPANY, et al., TIMELY APPEAR AT SCHEDULING

14 CONFERENCE

Defendants, 15 (Doc. 2) 16 January 12, 2026, Deadline 17 18 Background 19 Plaintiffs Judy West and Paula West-Moore (“Plaintiffs”) initiated this action with the 20 filing of a complaint on September 11, 2023, in the County of Kern Superior Court, Case No. 21 BCV-23-103052, against Defendants Ford Motor Company (“Ford”) and Jim Burke Ford 22 (collectively, “Defendants”), before Defendant Ford removed the case to this Court on September 23 23, 2025. (Doc. 1; Doc. 1-1 Exhibit A). On September 24, 2025, the Court entered an order setting 24 the initial scheduling conference for January 8, 2026, at 9:00 AM. (Doc. 2). In the order, the 25 parties were provided the email address for the undersigned’s courtroom deputy for the parties to 26 request and obtain Zoom teleconference connection details. Id. at 2. Further, the courtroom deputy 27 forwarded the Zoom connection details via email to counsel for the parties in advance of the scheduling conference. 1 On January 8, 2026, the Court convened via Zoom videoconference for the scheduling 2 conference. Cait Crable appeared on behalf of Defendants. Plaintiffs did not timely appear either 3 personally or through counsel. After the Court and Ms. Crable waited for five minutes from the 4 start of the conference for Plaintiffs’ appearance, Nina Sanaia joined the Zoom teleconference but 5 was unprepared to enter an appearance when the case was called due to her experiencing 6 audio/technical difficulties. After troubleshooting that issue, Ms. Sanaia, an un-noticed attorney, 7 entered her appearance on behalf of Plaintiffs, and after the Court questioned why she is not a 8 noticed attorney on the docket, Ms. Sanaia explained that she would file a notice of appearance 9 shortly after the conference. When the Court asked Ms. Sanaia to explain the circumstances of 10 her late appearance, she stated that she was covering for noticed counsel who were busy with trial 11 in an unrelated matter, was only recently provided a link to access the conference, and provided 12 no further details. The Court deemed these explanations unsatisfactory and the undersigned 13 recessed the scheduling conference and notified counsel that a show cause order would follow. 14 Local Rule 110 provides that “[f]ailure of counsel or of a

party to comply with these Rules 15 or with any order of the Court may be grounds for imposition by the Court of any and all 16 sanctions . . . within the inherent power of the Court.” The Court has the inherent power to control 17 its docket and may, in the exercise of that power, impose sanctions where appropriate. *Bautista v. 18 Los Angeles County*, 216 F.3d 837, 841 (9th Cir. 2000). 19 Conclusion and Order 20 In light of counsel for Plaintiffs’ failure to timely appear at the mandatory scheduling 21 conference on January 8, 2026, it is HEREBY ORDERED, counsel for Plaintiffs shall show cause 22 in writing no later than January 12, 2026, why sanctions should not be imposed for Plaintiffs’ 23 failure to obey this Court’s orders. 24 25 Remainder of This Page Intentionally Left Blank 26 27 1 And it is FURTHER ORDERED that counsel for Plaintiffs initiate meet and confer efforts 2 | with counsel for Defendant and identify in counsel’s response to this show cause order at least two 3 | proposed dates of mutual availability to reconvene for scheduling conference no earlier than 14 4 | days from the date of this order. 5 Failure to comply with this order to show cause may result in the imposition of 6 | sanctions, up to and including a recommendation to dismiss the case. 7 IT IS SO ORDERED. 5! Dated: _ January 8, 2026 | br Pr 9 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28