

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Manuel Anthony Maestas v. Toyota Motor Corporation et al.

No. 8:25-cv-00478-JVS-E (C.D. Cal. May 21, 2025) · No. 8:25-cv-00478-JVS-E · Decided May 21, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Central District of California granted Manuel Anthony Maestas’s motion to remand. The court held that removal was untimely under 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b)(3), declined to apply the multidistrict litigation stay, and remanded the case to the First Judicial District of the State of New Mexico.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	James V. Selna
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	May 21, 2025
DOCKET	8:25-cv-00478-JVS-E
DISPOSITION	remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved to remand a removed action to New Mexico state court. The Central District of California granted the motion and remanded the case.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Removal statutes are strictly construed against removal jurisdiction, doubts concerning removability are resolved in favor of remand, and the removing defendant bears the burden of establishing that removal is proper.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished, nonprecedential district court order
PARTIES	TRQSS, Inc., Toyota Motor Corporation and other defendants v. Manuel Anthony Maestas

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- federalism
- subject matter jurisdiction

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether removal was untimely under the thirty-day removal period in 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b)(3).
2. Whether the one-year limitation on removal in 28 U.S.C. § 1446(c)(1) was excused because the plaintiff acted in bad faith to prevent removal.
3. Whether the case should be remanded to New Mexico state court.

HOLDINGS

1. Removal was untimely because TRQSS could ascertain by February 15, 2024, and at least by May 6, 2024, that the case had allegedly become removable, but did not remove it until October 8, 2024.
2. TRQSS failed to establish that Maestas acted in bad faith to prevent removal, so the asserted bad-faith exception did not excuse the removal.
3. The court deemed TRQSS's failure to oppose the remand motion consent to granting the motion under the applicable local rules.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“This strong ‘presumption against removal jurisdiction means that ‘the defendant always has the burden of establishing that removal is proper.’”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Maestas originally filed the action in New Mexico state court against Toyota defendants and the New Mexico Department of Transportation. He later added TRQSS, Inc., dismissed two forum defendants, and left J-H Supply Company, Inc. and Harry Apodaca as the remaining forum defendants. TRQSS removed the case more than thirty days after the case allegedly became removable, based on the dismissal and the absence of appearances by the remaining forum defendants. Maestas provided evidence that he had attempted service on those defendants.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Maestas filed the action in New Mexico state court in 2021 and later added TRQSS, Inc. as a defendant. After dismissing two forum defendants, TRQSS removed the case to the District of New Mexico on October 8, 2024. Maestas moved to remand; before that motion was decided, the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation transferred the case to the Central District of California for consolidation with MDL No. 2151. Maestas renewed the motion to remand, which the court granted.

DISPOSITION

remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The case was remanded to state court in the First Judicial District of the State of New Mexico. The June 2, 2025 hearing was vacated.

CASES CITED

- City of Chicago v. International College of Surgeons, 522 U.S. 156, 163 (1997)
- Moore-Thomas v. Alaska Airlines, Inc., 553 F.3d 1241, 1244 (9th Cir. 2009)
- Gaus v. Miles, Inc., 980 F.2d 564, 566 (9th Cir. 1992)
- In re Toyota Motor Corp. Unintended Acceleration Marketing, Sales Practices, and Products Liability Litigation

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