UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Michael Moore v. Saia Motor Freight Line, LLC

Moore v. Saia Motor Freight Line · No. 2:24-cv-03156-FLA (Ex) · Decided August 4, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Central District of California denied Michael Moore's motion to remand a putative class action against Saia Motor Freight Line, LLC. The court held that minimal diversity existed and that the defendant established, by a preponderance of the evidence, more than $5 million in controversy under the Class Action Fairness Act. The court calculated approximately $5.8 million based on alleged meal-period premiums, rest-break premiums, and waiting-time penalties.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Fernando L. Aenlle-Rocha
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	August 4, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-cv-03156-FLA (Ex)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved to remand a putative class action that Defendant removed from Los Angeles County Superior Court under the Class Action Fairness Act.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The removing party bears the burden of establishing federal subject matter jurisdiction under CAFA by a preponderance of the evidence when the amount in controversy is contested. The court evaluates the amount in controversy at the time of removal using reasonable assumptions supported by evidence.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential district court order
PARTIES	Michael Moore v. Saia Motor Freight Line, LLC

TOPICS

class actions · subject matter jurisdiction · civil procedure · wage and hour

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure · employment law · commercial litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether minimal diversity under CAFA was established when the removal allegations stated that Plaintiff resided in California.
2. Whether Defendant established by a preponderance of the evidence that the aggregate amount in controversy exceeded CAFA's $5 million threshold.
3. Whether dismissal or possible preemption of certain claims required reducing the amount in controversy for purposes of CAFA jurisdiction.

HOLDINGS

1. An allegation that Plaintiff resides in California was sufficient in this case to establish minimal diversity for purposes of CAFA jurisdiction.
2. Defendant established by a preponderance of the evidence that more than $5 million was in controversy under CAFA.
3. The court declined to reduce the amount in controversy based on the dismissal of certain claims or the possibility of a valid preemption defense, because CAFA jurisdiction is assessed at the time of removal and a defense that might reduce recovery does not eliminate jurisdiction.

KEY QUOTATIONS

> *"The party seeking removal bears the burden of establishing federal subject matter jurisdiction under CAFA."* (at 2)

> *"Under this system, a defendant cannot establish removal jurisdiction by mere speculation and conjecture, with unreasonable assumptions."* (at 2-3)

> *"Plaintiff's allegation that Defendant's failure to pay meal premiums and provide timely meal periods was a "systematic" and "company-wide policy" justifies Defendant assuming, for purposes of the amount in controversy, that Defendant failed to provide meal periods 25% of the time"* (at 5)

> *"The total amount in controversy for these three claims alone is approximately $5,800,075."* (at 7)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Michael Moore filed a putative class action against Saia Motor Freight Line, LLC alleging California wage-and-hour violations, including failure to reimburse business expenses and unfair business practices. After other claims were dismissed without prejudice, claims under California Labor Code section 2802 and California Business and Professions Code sections 17200 et seq. remained. Saia removed the action under CAFA and supported its amount-in-controversy calculations with declarations and other materials. The court found that alleged meal-period, rest-break, and waiting-time violations placed approximately $5,800,075 in controversy.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a class action in Los Angeles County Superior Court on March 11, 2024. Defendant removed the action to federal court on April 17, 2024, invoking CAFA jurisdiction. After several causes of action were dismissed without prejudice, two claims remained, and Plaintiff moved to remand. The district court denied the motion.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Ibarra v. Manheim Investments, Inc., 775 F.3d 1193, 1197 (9th Cir. 2015)
- Dart Cherokee Basin Operating Co., LLC v. Owens, 135 S. Ct. 547, 554 (2014)
- Dart Cherokee Basin Operating Co. v. Owens, 574 U.S. 81, 89 (2014)
- Abrego v. Dow Chemical Co., 443 F.3d 676, 683 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Garcia v. Williams Scotsman, Inc., 2024 WL 3811267, at *3 (C.D. Cal. Aug. 13, 2024)
- McEntire v. Kmart Corp., 2010 WL 553443, at *3 (D.N.M. Feb. 9, 2010)
- Yorba v. Government Employees Insurance Co., 2024 WL 3442416, at *2 (S.D. Cal. 2024)
- Johnson v. Bamia 2 LLC, 2022 WL 2901579, at *3 (E.D. Cal. July 22, 2022)
- Hull v. Mars Petcare US, Inc., 2018 WL 3583051, at *4 (C.D. Cal. July 25, 2018)
- Oda v. Gucci America, Inc., 2015 WL 93335, at *4-5 (C.D. Cal. Jan. 7, 2015)
- Geographic Expeditions, Inc. v. Estate of Lhotka ex rel. Lhotka, 599 F.3d 1102, 1108 (9th Cir. 2010)