

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA, SOUTH BEND DIVISION

Hangxiao Che, et al. v. Daimler Trucks North America LLC, et al.

Che v. Daimler Trucks North America LLC · No. 3:21-CV-554-CCB-SJF · Decided March 11, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana grants Daimler Trucks North America LLC and Daimler Trucks & Buses US Holding, LLC's motion for summary judgment in a products-liability action arising from a tour bus accident. Applying Indiana law, the court holds that DTNA was a component-part manufacturer with no duty to include optional electronic stability control because the final manufacturer, SVO Group, was offered and rejected the feature. The court also grants summary judgment to DTB because plaintiffs presented no evidence of its involvement in producing or selling the chassis.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, South Bend Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Cristal C. Brisco
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, South Bend Division
DECIDED	March 11, 2026
DOCKET	3:21-CV-554-CCB-SJF
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs brought products-liability, negligence, breach-of-implied-warranty, and wrongful-death claims arising from a tour bus accident. Defendants Daimler Trucks North America LLC and Daimler Trucks & Buses US Holding, LLC moved for summary judgment.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is appropriate when the movant shows that there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and that the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court construes facts and reasonable inferences in favor of the nonmoving party, but does not weigh evidence or assess credibility.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished federal district court opinion; precedential status is not stated in the opinion.

PARTIES

Hangxiao Che, et al. v. Daimler Trucks North America LLC, et al.

TOPICS

products liability

summary judgment

negligence

wrongful death

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

products liability

civil procedure

commercial litigation

personal injury

wrongful death

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Indiana law governed plaintiffs' claims.
2. Whether DTNA was entitled to summary judgment under Indiana's component-part manufacturer defense because it was a component-part manufacturer, ESC was offered to SVO as the final manufacturer, and SVO rejected ESC.
3. Whether DTNA could be liable for failing to warn downstream consumers despite SVO's rejection of ESC.
4. Whether DTB was entitled to summary judgment because plaintiffs presented no evidence connecting DTB to the production or sale of the chassis or otherwise establishing a basis for imposing DTNA's liability on DTB.

HOLDINGS

1. Indiana law governs the action because Indiana had the closer relationship to the sale of the subject chassis and all acts related to that sale occurred in Indiana.
2. A component-part manufacturer has no duty to include an optional safety feature that was offered to and rejected by the final manufacturer. DTNA established as a matter of law that it was a component-part manufacturer, ESC was offered to SVO, and SVO rejected ESC.
3. Plaintiffs' minimally developed argument that DTNA breached a duty to warn downstream consumers could not overcome the component-part manufacturer defense after ESC was offered to and rejected by the final manufacturer.
4. DTB was entitled to summary judgment because plaintiffs presented no evidence that DTB participated in the production or sale of the subject chassis or that DTNA's conduct could otherwise be imputed to DTB.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“has no duty to include optional safety features that were offered to, and rejected by, the final manufacturer.”
(at 625)

“is in the best position to decide which features are necessary—and which are not—for the environment in which the integrated product will be used.” (at 625)

“For these reasons, the Daimler Defendants’ Motion for Summary Judgment, (ECF 188), is GRANTED.”
(Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

DTNA sold an incomplete M2 truck chassis that was later customized by SVO Group, Inc. into a tour bus. The bus lacked electronic stability control, although ESC was available as an option and SVO had ordered some other chassis with ESC and some without it. The bus subsequently crashed in Utah, and plaintiffs alleged that the absence of ESC caused their injuries and damages.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The court previously determined at the pleadings stage that Indiana law governed the action. On defendants' motion for summary judgment, the court held that DTNA established the Indiana component-part manufacturer defense as a matter of law and that plaintiffs presented no evidence creating a genuine dispute regarding DTB's involvement. The court granted the Daimler Defendants' motion for summary judgment.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242, 248 (1986)
- Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co. v. Zenith Radio Corp., 475 U.S. 574, 587 (1986)
- Heft v. Moore, 351 F.3d 278, 282 (7th Cir. 2003)
- Waldrige v. Am. Hoechst Corp., 24 F.3d 918, 920 (7th Cir. 1994)
- Nelson v. Napolitano, 657 F.3d 586, 590 (7th Cir. 2011)
- United States v. Beavers, 756 F.3d 1044, 1059 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Robin v. Espo Eng'g Corp., 200 F.3d 1081, 1088 (7th Cir. 2000)
- Ortiz v. Werner Enters., Inc., 834 F.3d 760 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Hammel v. Eau Galle Cheese Factory, 407 F.3d 852, 859 (7th Cir. 2005)
- Goodman v. Nat'l Sec. Agency, Inc., 621 F.3d 651, 654 (7th Cir. 2010)
- Atkinson v. P&G-Clairol, Inc., 813 F. Supp. 2d 1021, 1023–24 (N.D. Ind. 2011)
- Brewer v. PACCAR, Inc., 124 N.E.3d 616, 619, 621, 625 (Ind. 2019)
- Jarrell v. Monsanto, 528 N.E.2d 1158 (Ind. Ct. App. 1988)
- O'Brien v. Watco Contract Switching, Inc., 802 N.E.2d 999, 1007–08 (Ind. Ct. App. 2004)

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