

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Derrick Hill v. California Department of Correction, et al.

Hill v. California Department of Correction · No. No. 2:24-CV-1607-DC-DMC-P · Decided December 17, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California grants Defendants’ unopposed motion to stay this prisoner civil rights action under the Colorado River doctrine. The Court finds that a parallel Sacramento County Superior Court action, filed first and involving the same events, claims, and defendants, warrants a stay to avoid duplicative litigation and inconsistent results. Defendants must file status reports every 90 days until the state court action concludes.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Dennis M. Cota
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	December 17, 2025
DOCKET	No. 2:24-CV-1607-DC-DMC-P
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought a prisoner civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Defendants moved, without opposition, to stay the federal proceedings under the Colorado River abstention doctrine because a parallel state-court action involving the same events, claims, and defendants was filed first.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the Colorado River doctrine and evaluated the eight factors governing whether a federal court should stay or dismiss a federal action in light of parallel state proceedings.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district-court order
PARTIES	Derrick Hill v. California Department of Correction, et al.

TOPICS

- section 1983
- civil rights
- civil procedure
- federalism

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil rights litigation

Federal courts and abstention

Prisoner litigation

Civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the federal action should be stayed under the Colorado River doctrine because a parallel state-court action involving the same facts, claims, and defendants was filed first.
2. Whether the Colorado River factors favored staying the federal action pending resolution of the state-court proceeding.

HOLDINGS

1. When a parallel state-court action alleges the same facts as a concurrent federal action, the federal district court may stay the federal action under the Colorado River doctrine.
2. The Colorado River factors warranted staying the federal action pending resolution of the parallel Sacramento County Superior Court action.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“When a parallel state court action has been filed alleging the same facts as in a concurrent federal court action, the district court may dismiss or stay the federal action.” (at 1)

“Defendants’ unopposed motion for a stay of federal proceedings pursuant to Colorado River is GRANTED.” (at 3)

“This action is stayed pending resolution of the parallel Sacramento County Superior Court action.” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff, a state prisoner proceeding pro se, alleged civil-rights violations arising from a cell extraction on June 4, 2022. He filed a state-court action alleging the same facts against the same defendants before filing this federal § 1983 action. Both proceedings were pending in courts located in the same geographic area, and the state court could adjudicate the federal claims.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed an action in Sacramento County Superior Court on May 29, 2024, arising from a June 4, 2022 cell extraction and naming the same defendants. Plaintiff then filed this federal action on June 4, 2024. The federal court granted Defendants' unopposed motion to stay the federal case pending resolution of the state action.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Colorado River Water Conservation District v. United States, 424 U.S. 800 (1976)

- *Coopers & Lybrand v. Sun-Diamond Growers*, 912 F.2d 1135, 1138 (9th Cir. 1990)
- *R.R. Street & Co. v. Transportation Insurance Co.*, 656 F.3d 966, 978-79 (9th Cir. 2011)
- *United States v. 14.02 Acres of Land*, 530 F.3d 883, 894 (9th Cir. 2008)
- *Kasey v. Molybdenum Corp. of America*, 336 F.2d 560, 563 (9th Cir. 1964)
- *Chandler v. United States*, 378 F.2d 906, 909 (9th Cir. 1967)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 9 FOR THE EASTERN
DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA 10 11 DERRICK HILL, No. 2:24-CV-1607-DC-DMC-P 12
Plaintiff, 13 v. ORDER 14 CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION, et al., 15
Defendants. 16 17 18 Plaintiff, a prisoner proceeding pro se, brings this civil rights action pursuant
to 19 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Pending before the Court is Defendants’ unopposed motion to stay 20
proceedings.

See ECF No. 33. 21 Plaintiff has filed parallel lawsuits arising from a cell extraction occurring on
June 22 4, 2022. In addition to the instant federal action, Plaintiff filed a case in the Sacramento
County 23 Superior Court alleging the same facts and naming the same defendants. See *Hill v.*
California 24 Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, et al., Sacramento County Superior
Court Case 25 No. 24CV010562 (state court action); see also Def.

Req. Jud. Not., ECF No. 33-1.1 The state 26 1 Error! Main Document Only.The Court may take
judicial notice pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence 201 of matters of public record. See *U.S. v.*
14.02 Acres of Land, 530 27 F.3d 883, 894 (9th Cir. 2008).

Thus, this Court may take judicial notice of state court records, see *Kasey v. Molybdenum Corp.*
of America, 336 F.2d 560, 563 (9th Cir. 1964), as well as its own 28 records, see *Chandler v. U.S.*,
378 F.2d 906, 909 (9th Cir. 1967). 1 court action was filed on May 29, 2024. See *id.* The instant
federal action was filed on June 4, 2 2024. See ECF No. 1. 3 When a parallel state court action has
been filed alleging the same facts as in a 4 concurrent federal court action, the district court may
dismiss or stay the federal action.

See 5 *Colorado River Water Conservation Dist. V. United States*, 424 U.S. 800 (1976). The Ninth
6 Circuit had held that, when the Colorado River doctrine applies, the district court should stay, 7
rather than dismiss, the federal action. See *Coopers & Lybrand v. Sun-Diamond Growers*, 912 8
F.2d 1135, 1138 (1990).

In assessing whether Colorado River applies, the district court should 9 consider eight factors as
follows: (1) which court first assumed jurisdiction over any property at 10 stake; (2) the
inconvenience of the federal forum; (3) the desire to avoid piecemeal litigation; (4) 11 the order in
which the forums obtained jurisdiction; (5) whether federal law or state law provided 12 the rule
of decision on the merits; (6) whether the state court proceedings can adequately protect 13 the

rights of the federal litigant; (7) the desire to avoid forum shopping; and (8) whether the state 14 court proceedings will resolve all issues before the federal court.

See *R.R. St. & Co. v. Transp. 15 Ins. Co.*, 656 F.3d 966, 978-79 (9th Cir. 2011). 16 Here, the first two factors are inapplicable because, first, no property is at stake 17 and, second, there is no inconvenience associated with the federal forum given that both this court 18 and the Sacramento County Superior Court are within the same geographic area.

The third factor 19 of avoid piecemeal litigation weighs in favor of a stay because of the danger of this court and the 20 state court duplicating efforts and reaching different results. The fourth factor also weighs in 21 favor of a stay because the state court action was filed before the instant federal action.

The fifth 22 factor is neutral because both the state court and this court can hear and decide the issues 23 presented and the state court has concurrent jurisdiction over any federal law claims presented in 24 the two cases.

For this same latter reason, the sixth factor favors a stay because the state court 25 can hear and decide any federal issues presented. Though Defendants argue that the seventh 26 factor weighs in favor of a stay because “Plaintiff clearly is forum shopping by asserting the same 27 claims against the same defendants based on the same events in different courts,” ECF No. 33, 28 pgs.

6, the Court concludes that there is likely no ill intent in Plaintiff’s successive filings. 1 | Rather, given that Plaintiff is proceeding in both actions pro se, the duplicative cases may simply 2 | be the result of Plaintiffs lack of legal training and a desire to make sure his case is heard.

Thus, 3 || the Court concludes the seventh factor is also neutral. The eighth factor weighs in favor of a stay 4 || because the state court is capable of resolving all claims presented, whether they be state law 5 || claims or federal claims. 6 Having considered the Colorado River factors, the Court finds that a stay of the 7 || instant federal action pending resolution of the state court action is warranted.

The Court will 8 | direct Defendants to file periodic reports on the status of the state court action. 9 Accordingly, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED as follows: 10 1. Defendants’ unopposed motion for a stay of federal proceedings pursuant 11 || to Colorado River is GRANTED. 12 2. This action is stayed pending resolution of the parallel Sacramento County 13 || Superior Court action.

14 3. Defendants shall file a status report within 90 days and every 90 days 15 || thereafter until the state court action is concluded. 16 17 || Dated: December 17, 2025 = IS Co 18 DENNIS M. COTA 19 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28