

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
FLORIDA

Gerson R. Sabio Velasquez, as Personal Representative of the Estate
of Roberto Andres Sabio Ruiz v. Seabulk Tankers, Inc., et al.

Reyes · No. 0:25-CV-60834-LEIBOWITZ/AUGUSTIN-BIRCH · Decided April 21, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida denied Seabulk Tankers, Inc.’s motion for a protective order seeking to preclude inquiry into seven topics designated for a Rule 30(b) (6) corporate representative deposition. The court held that the topics could produce relevant information concerning the decedent’s fitness for employment, the defendant’s discovery responses, and its contentions regarding the decedent’s medical conditions, while preserving objections to individual questions for the deposition.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida
DECIDED	April 21, 2026
DOCKET	0:25-CV-60834-LEIBOWITZ/AUGUSTIN-BIRCH
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant moved for a protective order under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c) to preclude inquiry into seven topics identified for a Rule 30(b)(6) corporate representative deposition.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A party seeking a protective order bears the burden of establishing good cause under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c). Discovery is permissible when it concerns nonprivileged matter relevant to a claim or defense and proportional to the needs of the case.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown

TOPICS

- discovery dispute
- civil procedure
- admiralty

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Seabulk established good cause for a protective order precluding inquiry into seven identified Rule 30(b)(6) deposition topics.
2. Whether the Court should prohibit or limit the disputed deposition topics before the deposition occurs.

HOLDINGS

1. The motion for a protective order was denied because inquiry into each of the seven topics could produce information relevant to the lawsuit.
2. Seabulk could preserve objections to individual questions during the deposition; the possibility that some questions might be objectionable did not justify precluding the topics in advance.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Given that inquiry into each of the seven topics in dispute could produce relevant information, Defendant’s request for a protective order precluding that inquiry is denied.”

“The requesting party has the obligation to reconsider its position, narrow the scope of the topic, or otherwise stand on its position and seek to compel additional answers if necessary, following the deposition.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff sought to examine Seabulk's corporate representative on seven topics concerning the company's treatment of seamen who were unfit for employment, its interrogatory answers and document-production responses, and its contentions regarding the decedent's medical conditions. Seabulk argued that the topics should be precluded before the deposition through a protective order. The Court concluded that each topic could produce information relevant to Plaintiff's claims concerning whether the decedent became medically unfit and whether Seabulk should have acted differently.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The action was pending in the Southern District of Florida when Seabulk Tankers moved for a protective order concerning seven Rule 30(b)(6) deposition topics. The motion was fully briefed, and the Court scheduled but canceled a hearing after determining that the dispute could be resolved on the papers. The Court denied the motion.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Stansell v. Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colom., 120 F.4th 754, 766 (11th Cir. 2024)
- Florida v. United States, 342 F.R.D. 153, 156–57 (N.D. Fla. 2022)

- New World Network Ltd. v. M/V Norwegian Sea, No. 05-22916-CIV, 2007 WL 1068124, at *4 (S.D. Fla. Apr. 6, 2007)

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