

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
MISSOURI

Isakson v. Schaeffler Group USA Inc., et al.

Isakson · No. 3:25-cv-05090-MDH · Decided April 7, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri grants Plaintiffs’ motion to remand an environmental contamination personal-injury action to Missouri state court. The court concludes that Plaintiffs stated a colorable claim against the nondiverse Burns & McDonnell defendants, so fraudulent joinder did not apply.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Douglas Harpool
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri
DECIDED	April 7, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-cv-05090-MDH
DISPOSITION	remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs moved to remand a removed diversity action to Missouri state court, arguing that the nondiverse Burns & McDonnell defendants were not fraudulently joined.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a motion to remand based on alleged fraudulent joinder, the removing party bears the burden of showing by a preponderance of the evidence that federal jurisdiction exists and must establish that the claim against the diversity-destroying defendant has no reasonable basis in fact and law. The court determines whether Missouri law might impose liability on the nondiverse defendant and does not resolve ultimate causation, merits, or affirmative-defense issues.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

PARTIES

Loye Isakson, Deborah Isakson, et al. v. Schaeffler Group USA Inc., FAG Bearings, LLC, FAG Bearings Corporation, FAG Bearing Corporation, FAG Holding Corporation, Norma FAG Bearings Corporation, Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc., Burns & McDonnell Waste Consultants, Inc., et al.

TOPICS

subject matter jurisdiction

civil procedure

environmental law

personal injury

negligence

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

environmental law

personal injury

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Burns & McDonnell was fraudulently joined as a nondiverse defendant such that removal was proper.
2. Whether the allegations against Burns & McDonnell stated a colorable claim under Missouri law despite Defendants' arguments concerning causation, the statute of limitations, the statute of repose, and other affirmative defenses.

HOLDINGS

1. Burns & McDonnell was not fraudulently joined because Plaintiffs stated a legally viable claim and Missouri law could impose liability on Burns & McDonnell under the facts alleged.
2. Arguments that Plaintiffs could not ultimately establish causation or that some claims might be barred by a statute of limitations, statute of repose, or another affirmative defense did not establish fraudulent joinder and were matters for the state court to determine.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“All doubts about federal jurisdiction should be resolved in favor of remand to state court.”

“At this review, the Court does not weigh whether causation may ultimately be established, but rather whether Missouri law could impose liability on the claims presented.”

“Here, the Court finds Plaintiffs have stated a claim against Burns & McDonnell.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiffs allege personal injuries from exposure to trichloroethylene that contaminated the Villages of Silver Creek and Saginaw after decades of use and releases at FAG's Joplin ball-bearing facility. They allege that Burns & McDonnell, which FAG hired as an environmental consultant, concealed or misrepresented the extent and migration of the contamination and performed field work that worsened the contamination. Plaintiffs further allege that they were present, used groundwater, and were exposed during the period in which Burns & McDonnell performed the challenged environmental work.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs originally filed the personal-injury and environmental-contamination action in the Circuit Court of Jasper County, Missouri. FAG removed the action to the United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri on the ground that Burns & McDonnell had been fraudulently joined. The federal court granted Plaintiffs' motion to remand and ordered the case returned to the Jasper County Circuit Court.

DISPOSITION

remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The case shall be remanded to the Circuit Court of Jasper County, Missouri.

CASES CITED

- Kokkonen v. Guardian Life Ins. Co. of Am., 511 U.S. 375 (1994)
- Knudson v. Sys. Painters, Inc., 634 F.3d 968, 975 (8th Cir. 2011)
- Junk v. Terminix Int'l Co., 628 F.3d 439, 446 (8th Cir. 2010)
- In re Prempro Prods. Liab. Litig., 591 F.3d 613, 620 (8th Cir. 2010)
- Filla v. Norfolk S. Ry. Co., 336 F.3d 806, 810-811 (8th Cir. 2003)
- Schoonmaker v. Emerson Climate Techs., Inc., No. 6:16-CV-03017-MDH, 2016 WL 1573003, at *2 (W.D. Mo. Apr. 19, 2016)
- Moore v. Taser Int'l, Inc., 2015 WL 4715968, at *5 (E.D. Mo. Aug. 7, 2015)
- Boyer v. Snap-On Tools Corp., 913 F.2d 108, 111 (3d Cir. 1990), cert. denied, 498 U.S. 1085 (1991)
- Burns & McDonnell. Knapp v. Schaeffler Grp. USA Inc., No. 3:21-CV-05035-MDH, 2021 WL 2456861, at *3 (W.D. Mo. June 16, 2021)
- Fag Bearings Corp. v. Gulf States Paper Co., No. 95-5081-CV-SW-8, 1998 WL 919115 (W.D. Mo. Sept. 30, 1998)
- Taylor v. Schaeffler Group USA, Inc., No. 20AO-CC00341 (Jasper Cty. Cir. Ct. June 11, 2021)

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