

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

World Express & Connection, Inc. v. Crocus Investments, LLC

World Express · No. 15-8126 (MAH) · Decided December 18, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey addresses Defendants’ motion for an extension of time to file a notice of appeal. The court vacates its September 2, 2025 Opinion and Order as to parties subject to a bankruptcy stay, holds that claims against the other parties remain effective, denies the extension motion as moot because no final appealable order exists, and stays the action for the duration of the bankruptcy stay.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Michael A. Hammer
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
DECIDED	December 18, 2025
DOCKET	15-8126 (MAH)
DISPOSITION	vacated
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants and third-party plaintiffs moved for an extension of time to file a notice of appeal based on the bankruptcy filings of two third-party defendants. The court sua sponte reconsidered the effect of the bankruptcy stay, vacated its prior Opinion and Order as to the debtor parties, denied the extension motion as moot, and stayed the action for the duration of the bankruptcy stay.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the statutory automatic-stay provisions and evaluated whether a final, appealable order existed under 28 U.S.C. § 1291 and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 54(b).
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown
PARTIES	Crocus Investments, LLC, Crocus FZE, Alexander Safonov, Middle East Asia Alfa FZE v. World Express & Connection, Inc., Marine Transport Logistic, Inc., Royal Finance Group, Inc., Car Express & Import, Inc., Aleksandr Solovyev, Alla Solovyeva, Raya Bakhirev

TOPICS

automatic stay

bankruptcy

appellate jurisdiction

final judgment rule

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

bankruptcy

appellate procedure

commercial litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the automatic bankruptcy stay under 11 U.S.C. § 362(a) applied to the pending proceedings and required vacatur of the court's prior order as to the debtor parties.
2. Whether the court had entered a final, appealable order such that an extension of time to file a notice of appeal could be granted.

HOLDINGS

1. The filing of the Chapter 11 petitions automatically stayed proceedings involving claims against the debtor parties, and the court's September 2, 2025 Opinion and Order had to be vacated as to those parties because orders entered during the stay were void ab initio.
2. The motion to extend the time to file a notice of appeal was moot because the court had not entered a final, appealable judgment and had not certified a partial final judgment under Rule 54(b).

KEY QUOTATIONS

“All proceedings in a single case are not lumped together for purposes of automatic stay analysis.”

(Discussion § III.a)

“Absent relief from the stay, judicial actions and proceedings against the debtor are void ab initio.”

(Discussion § III.a)

“A judgment is final and appealable under 28 U.S.C. § 1291 if it ‘ends the litigation on the merits and leaves nothing for the court to do but execute the judgment.’” (Discussion § III.b)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The underlying dispute concerns the shipping, export, repair, and resale of three boats and two cars. After partial summary judgment rulings, the remaining claims were tried in a three-day bench trial, but the court declined to enter judgment because no party met its burden of proof. Two third-party defendants, Alla Solovyeva and Marine Transport Logistic, Inc., filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy petitions in July 2025, triggering the automatic stay.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The district court previously granted and denied in part cross-motions for summary judgment, after which claims by the parties proceeded to a three-day bench trial. On September 2, 2025, the court declined to enter judgment because the parties had not carried their respective burdens. The court later learned that two third-party defendants had filed Chapter 11 petitions in July 2025 and determined that the automatic stay applied to proceedings involving claims against those debtors, requiring vacatur of the September 2 order as to them.

Because no final, appealable judgment remained and no Rule 54(b) certification had been entered, the motion to extend the appeal deadline was denied as moot.

DISPOSITION

vacated

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The action remains stayed for the duration of the bankruptcy stay. Once the stay is lifted, the parties must inform the court within seven days. The September 2, 2025 Opinion and Order remains in effect as to parties other than the debtor parties.

CASES CITED

- World Express & Connection, Inc. v. Crocus Invs., LLC, No. 15-8126, 2025 WL 2505665 (D.N.J. Sept. 2, 2025)
- Maritime Elec. Co. v. United Jersey Bank, 959 F.2d 1194 (3d Cir. 1992)
- Assoc. of St. Croix Condo. Owners v. St. Croix Hotel Corp., 682 F.2d 446 (3d Cir. 1982)
- Ellis v. Consol. Diesel Elec. Corp., 894 F.2d 371 (10th Cir. 1990)
- Gulfstream Aerospace Corp. v. Mayacamas Corp., 485 U.S. 271 (1988)
- In re Vitreous Steel Prods. Co., 911 F.2d 1223 (7th Cir. 1990)

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