

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
ALEXANDRIA DIVISION**

RAI STRATEGIC HOLDINGS, INC. and)	
R.J. REYNOLDS VAPOR COMPANY,)	
)	
Plaintiffs and Counterclaim Defendants,)	
)	
v.)	
)	
ALTRIA CLIENT SERVICES LLC; PHILIP)	
MORRIS USA, INC.; and PHILIP MORRIS)	
PRODUCTS S.A.,)	
)	
Defendants and Counterclaim Plaintiffs.)	
)	

Case No. 1:20-cv-00393-LO-TCB

[PROPOSED] ORDER GRANTING PLAINTIFFS’ MOTION TO SEAL

This matter is before the Court on the motion filed by Plaintiffs RAI Strategic Holdings, Inc. and R.J. Reynolds Vapor Company (collectively, “Plaintiffs”) to file a corrected version of Plaintiffs’ Answer to Defendant Philip Morris Products S.A.’s Second Amended Counterclaims, which was filed under seal at ECF No. 523, under seal pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5.2(d) and Local Civil Rule 5(C).

Before this Court may seal documents, it must: “(1) provide public notice of the request to seal and allow interested parties a reasonable opportunity to object, (2) consider less drastic alternatives to sealing the documents, and (3) provide specific reasons and factual findings supporting its decision to seal the documents and for rejecting the alternatives.” *Ashcraft v. Conoco, Inc.*, 218 F.3d 282, 288 (4th Cir. 2000) (internal citations omitted). Upon consideration of Plaintiffs’ motion to seal and its memorandum in support thereof, the Court hereby **FINDS** as follows:

1. The public has received notice of the request to seal and has had reasonable opportunity to object. Plaintiffs' sealing motion was publicly docketed in accordance with Local Civil Rule 5. Defendants have had an opportunity to respond. The "public has had ample opportunity to object" to Plaintiffs' motion and, because "the Court has received no objections," the first requirement under *Ashcraft*, 218 F.3d at 302, has been satisfied. *GTSI Corp. v. Wildflower Int'l, Inc.*, No. 1:09-cv-123-JCC, 2009 WL 1248114, at *9 (E.D. Va. Apr. 30, 2009); *U.S. ex rel Carter v. Halliburton Co.*, No. 1:10-cv-864-JCC/TCB, 2011 WL 2077799, at *3 (E.D. Va. May 24, 2011) ("[T]he parties provided public notice of the request to seal that allowed interested parties a reasonable opportunity to object—nearly two weeks.").

2. Plaintiffs seek to seal and redact from the public record only information designated by the parties as confidential. Plaintiffs have filed publicly a redacted version of Plaintiffs' Answer to Defendant Philip Morris Products S.A.'s Second Amended Counterclaims at ECF No. 525, in addition to a sealed version, and have redacted only those limited portions they seek to seal. This selective and narrow protection of confidential material constitutes the least drastic method of shielding the information at issue. *Adams v. Object Innovation, Inc.*, No. 3:11-cv-272-REP-DWS, 2011 WL 7042224, at *4 (E.D. Va. Dec. 5, 2011) (The "proposal to redact only the proprietary and confidential information, rather than seal the entirety of his declaration, constitutes the least drastic method of shielding the information at issue."). The public has no legitimate interest in information that is confidential to Plaintiffs. *Id.* at *4. The information that Plaintiffs seek to seal includes confidential, proprietary, and competitively sensitive business information of Plaintiffs who could face harm if such information were to be released publicly. Specifically, the sensitive information that Plaintiffs move for leave to file under seal, and to redact from a publicly filed version, includes commercially sensitive materials

of Plaintiffs, such as information related to Plaintiffs' legal activities in connection with product development.

3. There is support for sealing Plaintiffs' corrected version of their Answer to Defendant Philip Morris Products S.A.'s Second Amended Counterclaims, filed under seal at ECF No. 523, with a publicly filed version containing strictly limited redactions. Plaintiffs' Answer to Defendant Philip Morris Products S.A.'s Second Amended Counterclaims contains material that falls within the scope of the stipulated protective order. Placing these materials under seal is proper because the public's interest in access is outweighed by a party's interest in "preserving confidentiality" of the limited amount of confidential information that is "normally unavailable to the public." *Flexible Benefits Council v. Feltman*, No. 1:08-cv-00371-JCC, 2008 WL 4924711, at *1 (E.D. Va. Nov. 13, 2008); *U.S. ex rel. Carter*, 2011 WL 2077799, at *3.

Therefore, based on the findings above, for good cause shown, it is hereby

ORDERED that the motion is **GRANTED**, and Plaintiffs are granted leave to file a **REDACTED** version of Plaintiffs' Answer to Defendant Philip Morris Products S.A.'s Second Amended Counterclaims.

And to file **UNDER SEAL** an un-redacted corrected version of Plaintiffs' Answer to Defendant Philip Morris Products S.A.'s Second Amended Counterclaims.

And **FURTHER ORDERED** that the un-redacted corrected version of Plaintiffs' Answer to Defendant Philip Morris Products S.A.'s Second Amended Counterclaims shall remain **SEALED** until further order of the Court.

ENTERED this ____ day of _____, 2021.

Alexandria, Virginia
