

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA  
Alexandria Division**

RAI STRATEGIC HOLDINGS, INC., <i>et al.</i> ,	)	
	)	
Plaintiffs,	)	
	)	
v.	)	Civil Action No. 1:20-cv-393 (LO/TCB)
	)	
ALTRIA CLIENT SERVICES LLC, <i>et al.</i> ,	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	
	)	

**ORDER**

This matter comes before the Court on Plaintiffs RAI Strategic Holdings, Inc. and R.J. Reynolds Vapor Company’s (“Plaintiffs”) Motions to Seal (Dkts. 551, 556) and supporting memoranda (Dkt. 554, 559). Plaintiffs request to file under seal an un-redacted version of their Opposition to Defendants’ Motion to Compel Reynolds’ 30(b)(6) Depositions (“Opposition”), accompanying exhibits 1-9 and 11-21 (Dkt. 553) and their corrected version of Exhibit 21 (Dkt. 558). Defendants Altria Client Services LLC, Philip Morris USA Inc., and Philip Morris Products S.A. replied in support of Plaintiffs’ motions (Dkts. 571, 572) pursuant to Local Civil Rule 5(C). *See* L. Civ. R. 5(C).

District courts have authority to seal court documents “if the public’s right of access is outweighed by competing interests.” *Ashcraft v. Conoco, Inc.*, 218 F.3d 288, 302 (4th Cir. 2000). Procedurally, a district court may seal court filings if it (1) “provide[s] public notice of the request to seal and allow[s] interested parties a reasonable opportunity to object, (2) consider[s] less drastic alternatives to sealing the documents, and (3) provide[s] specific reasons and factual

findings supporting its decision to seal the documents and for rejecting the alternatives.” *Id.*

Upon consideration of Plaintiffs’ filings, the Court makes the following findings.

First, Plaintiffs have provided public notice of its request to seal and interested parties have been given a reasonable opportunity to object. Plaintiffs filed their motions to seal and public notices on April 14, 2021. (*See* Dkts. 551, 552, 556, 557.) Because over seven days have elapsed since Plaintiffs filed the motions to seal and public notices, and no interested party has objected, the Court may treat this motion as uncontested under Local Civil Rule 5(C). *See* L. Civ. R. 5(C). Accordingly, Plaintiffs have satisfied this requirement under *Ashcraft* and the Local Civil Rules.

Second, this Court has considered less drastic alternatives. Plaintiffs submitted a redacted version of their Opposition. (Dkt. 555.) This selective protection of information constitutes the least drastic measure of sealing confidential material. *See Adams v. Object Innovation, Inc.*, No. 3:11cv272-REP-DWD, 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 [the document], constitutes the least drastic method of shielding the information at issue.”), *report and recommendation adopted*, 2012 WL 135428 (E.D. Va. Jan. 17, 2012).

Finally, the Court finds reason to seal the redacted portions of the Opposition and accompanying exhibits. The redacted portions contain the parties’ confidential, proprietary, and competitively sensitive business information. This information is also protected under the parties’ stipulated protective order and includes information related to the parties’ expert reports and testimony. As a result, public disclosure of the information could bring competitive harm to Plaintiffs.

Accordingly, it is hereby

**ORDERED** that Plaintiffs' motions to seal (Dkt. 551, 556) are **GRANTED**. Dockets number 553 and 558 shall remain permanently under seal.

ENTERED this 22nd day of April, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'T' and 'B' followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

/s/

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THERESA CARROLL BUCHANAN  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Alexandria, Virginia