

**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

**ORDER GRANTING REYNOLDS’S MOTION TO SEAL DOCUMENTS IN
SUPPORT OF MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL K. MEYER**

This matter is before the Court on Plaintiffs RAI Strategic Holdings, Inc. and R.J. Reynolds Vapor Company's (collectively, “Reynolds”) motion to seal and accompanying memorandum. (Dkts. 890, 893.) Reynolds seeks to file under seal their Memorandum in Support of Motion to Exclude Testimony of Paul K. Meyer and accompanying Exhibits 1-6, 8-10, and 13 (Dkt. 892) 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 Reynolds’s 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. Reynolds's sealing motion was publicly docketed in accordance with Local Civil Rule 5. Altria Client Services LLC, Philip Morris USA Inc., and Philip Morris Products S.A. (collectively PM/Altria) have had an opportunity to respond. The "public has had ample opportunity to object" to Reynolds's 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. Reynolds seeks to seal and redact from the public record only information designated by the parties as confidential. Reynolds has filed publicly redacted versions of Reynolds's Memorandum in Support of Motion to Exclude the Testimony of Paul K. Meyer and accompanying Exhibits 1 and 2, in addition to sealed versions, and have redacted only those limited portions it seeks to seal. Reynolds requested to have only Exhibits 3-6, 8-10, and 13 filed wholly under 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-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 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 Reynolds or PM/Altria. The information that Reynolds seeks to seal includes confidential, proprietary, and competitively sensitive business information of Reynolds and PM/Altria, each of which could face harm if such

information were to be released publicly. Specifically, the sensitive information that Reynolds moves for leave to file under seal and to redact from the public versions relates to and discusses confidential information of Reynolds and of PM/Altria, such as copies and descriptions of internal business documents, and deposition testimony regarding confidential business information.

3. There is support for filing Reynolds's Memorandum in Support of Motion to Exclude the Testimony of Paul K. Meyer and the identified accompanying exhibits under seal. Those filings contain 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 (Dkt. 890) is **GRANTED**, and Reynolds is granted leave to file **REDACTED** versions of Reynolds's Memorandum in Support of Motion to Exclude the Testimony of Paul K. Meyer and accompanying Exhibits 1 and 2 (Dkt. 895) and to file **UNDER SEAL** un-redacted versions of Reynolds's Memorandum in Support of Motion to Exclude the Testimony of Paul K. Meyer and accompanying Exhibits 1-6, 8-10, and 13 (Dkt. 892).

And it is **FURTHER ORDERED** that the un-redacted versions of Reynolds's Memorandum in Support of Motion to Exclude the Testimony of Paul K. Meyer and accompanying Exhibits 1-6, 8-10, and 13 shall remain **SEALED** until further order of the Court.

ENTERED this 31st day of January, 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TCB', with a long horizontal line extending to the right. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

THERESA CARROLL BUCHANAN
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

Alexandria, Virginia