

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
CIVIL DIVISION**

<b>ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND,</b>	)	
<b>Plaintiff</b>	)	
	)	<b>Case No. 2016 CA 004744 B</b>
<b>v.</b>	)	
	)	<b>Judge Neal E. Kravitz</b>
<b>HORMEL FOODS CORPORATION,</b>	)	
<b>Defendant</b>	)	

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**ORDER DENYING DEFENDANT’S MOTION IN SUPPORT OF SEALING CERTAIN  
DOCUMENTS FILED BY PLAINTIFF UNDER SEAL**

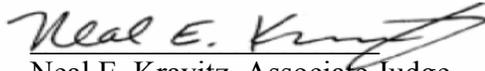
In accordance with Paragraph 18 of the protective order entered by the court on October 16, 2017, the defendant has filed a motion asking that several documents filed as exhibits to the plaintiff’s opposition to the defendant’s motion to compel discovery be permanently sealed. The defendant argues that by signing the parties’ proposed protective order the court found good cause to seal documents designated as confidential by the parties. The plaintiff has filed an opposition to the defendant’s motion.

The court concludes that the motion should be denied. First, the court’s decision to sign the protective order proposed by the parties did not imply a finding of good cause to seal every document designated as confidential by the parties. To the contrary, the court simply put in place an agreed-upon system to govern the parties’ handling of documents produced in discovery and identified as confidential by one side or the other. Nothing in the protective order delegated to the parties the court’s obligation to make sealing decisions in accordance with controlling legal standards. Second, good cause is not the standard by which sealing requests are addressed. The Court of Appeals has recognized a presumptive right of public access to documents relied on by the court in making rulings in civil cases and required that parties requesting the sealing of such documents rebut the presumption by demonstrating that interests favoring secrecy outweigh

the general and specific interests favoring disclosure. *Mokhiber v. Davis*, 537 A.2d 1100, 1109-11 (D.C. 1988). The defendant has not made the requisite showing as to any of the documents at issue.

Accordingly, it is this 17<sup>th</sup> day of July 2018

**ORDERED** that the motion is **denied**. The sealed exhibits to the plaintiff's opposition to the defendant's motion to compel discovery (filed on June 13, 2018) shall be unsealed and made a part of the public record.

  
Neal E. Kravitz, Associate Judge  
(Signed in Chambers)

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