

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEALS BOARD
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

FRANCISCO MORALES VILLEGAS, *Applicant*

vs.

**RECON360 LLC; REDWOOD FIRE AND CASUALTY INSURANCE COMPANY,
administered by BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESTATE COMPANIES, *Defendants***

**Adjudication Number: ADJ12852505
Salinas District Office**

**OPINION AND ORDER
DENYING PETITION
FOR REMOVAL**

Defendant has filed a petition for removal from the order taking the matter off calendar issued on January 12, 2026, by the workers' compensation administrative law judge (WCJ).

Defendant contends that the matter should immediately proceed to a bifurcated trial upon its petition for a replacement QME.

We have not received an Answer from applicant. The WCJ filed a Report and Recommendation on Petition for Removal (Report) recommending that we deny removal.

We have considered the allegations of the Petition for Removal and the contents of the WCJ's Report. Based on our review of the record and based upon the WCJ's analysis of the merits of petitioner's arguments in the WCJ's Report, we will deny removal.

Removal is an extraordinary remedy rarely exercised by the Appeals Board. (*Cortez v. Workers' Comp. Appeals Bd.* (2006) 136 Cal.App.4th 596, 599, fn. 5 [71 Cal.Comp.Cases 155]; *Kleemann v. Workers' Comp. Appeals Bd.* (2005) 127 Cal.App.4th 274, 280, fn. 2 [70 Cal.Comp.Cases 133].) The Appeals Board will grant removal only if the petitioner shows that substantial prejudice or irreparable harm will result if removal is not granted. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 8, 10955(a); see also *Cortez, supra*; *Kleemann, supra*.) Also, the petitioner must demonstrate that reconsideration will not be an adequate remedy if a final decision adverse to the petitioner ultimately issues. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 8, § 10955(a).) Here, based upon the WCJ's analysis of the merits of petitioner's arguments, we are not persuaded that substantial prejudice or irreparable

harm will result if removal is denied and/or that reconsideration will not be an adequate remedy if the matter ultimately proceeds to a final decision adverse to petitioner.

In workers' compensation, the general rule is that all matters are submitted at a single trial. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 8, § 10787(a).) However, it is within the discretion of a WCJ to bifurcate any issue if good cause is presented. Here, and for the reasons discussed by the WCJ in the Report, we agree that good cause was not presented to bifurcate the issue of a replacement panel.

Accordingly, we deny removal.

For the foregoing reasons,

IT IS ORDERED that defendant's Petition for Removal from the order taking the matter off calendar issued on January 12, 2026, by the WCJ is **DENIED**.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEALS BOARD

/s/ KATHERINE A. ZALEWSKI, CHAIR

I CONCUR,

/s/ CRAIG L. SNELLINGS, COMMISSIONER

/s/ ANNE SCHMITZ, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER



DATED AND FILED AT SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

June 25, 2026

SERVICE MADE ON THE ABOVE DATE ON THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW AT THEIR ADDRESSES SHOWN ON THE CURRENT OFFICIAL ADDRESS RECORD.

**FRANCISCO MORALES VILLEGAS
DILLES LAW
CALLAN LAW**

EDL/mt

I certify that I affixed the official seal of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board to this original decision on this date. o.o