

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE PATENT TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Meishan CRRC Fastening System Co., Ltd.

Petitioner,

v.

Howmet Aerospace Inc.

Patent Owner

IPR2026-00268
U.S. Patent No. 11,885,358

**PETITIONER'S MOTION TO SEAL OPPOSITION TO
PATENT OWNER'S SEALED MOTION**

Petitioner Meishan CRRC Fastening System Co. Ltd. (“Petitioner”) respectfully submits this Motion to seal the confidential version of its Opposition to Patent Owner’s Motion for Additional Discovery (“Opposition”). Petitioner files this Motion because the Opposition references material that Patent Owner previously filed under seal—namely, Exhibit 2004 and corresponding references in Patent Owner’s Motion to Seal, Paper 6. Petitioner certifies it made a good-faith effort to confer with Patent Owner Howmet Aerospace Inc. (“Howmet”), but Howmet did not respond by the requested deadline of 5:00 p.m. Central on April 6.

I. RELIEF REQUESTED

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 42.14 and 42.54, and for the reasons set forth below, Petitioner requests that the confidential version of its Opposition be placed under seal and subject to protective order. Petitioner is concurrently filing a public version of its Opposition with redactions narrowly limited to material that quotes, paraphrases, or specifically references Exhibit 2004 and the same information Patent Owner previously filed under seal in connection with its Motion for Additional Discovery.

II. GOOD CAUSE FOR RELIEF REQUESTED

A party may move to seal confidential information, including confidential “commercial information.” 37 C.F.R. § 42.54(a)(7). Here, the information sought to be sealed is derived from and directly discusses Exhibit 2004, which Patent

Owner itself filed under seal, as well as corresponding references that Patent Owner redacted from its own motion papers. Patent Owner thus put the issue of confidentiality before the Board in the first instance. Accordingly, Petitioner files this Motion to avoid public disclosure of material that Patent Owner has already treated as confidential.

Moreover, the party moving to seal may show “good cause” by demonstrating “that (1) the information sought to be sealed is truly confidential, (2) a concrete harm would result upon public disclosure, (3) there exists a genuine need to rely in the trial on the specific information sought to be sealed, and (4), on balance, an interest in maintaining confidentiality outweighs the strong public interest in having an open record.” *Argentum Pharms. LLC v. Alcon Research, Ltd.*, IPR2017-01053, Paper 27 at 4 (P.T.A.B. Jan. 19, 2018) (informative). Good cause exists to file the Opposition under seal under these factors.

First, the information sought to be sealed is truly confidential. The Opposition references and quotes Exhibit 2004, which reflects confidential correspondence between Howmet and Nextpower, Inc. (“Nextpower”) relating to Nextpower’s confidential business information relating to its inventory of fasteners, which is not public. Nextpower, Inc., is an identified real party-in-interest to the Petition.

Second, disclosing this information would result in concrete harm to the

parties. The Opposition's references to Exhibit 2004 disclose confidential business information regarding Nextpower's business relationships and its demand for and sources of fasteners. Information about those relationships would provide competitors with unwarranted and prejudicial knowledge about Nextpower's confidential business plans.

Third, there is a genuine need in these proceedings to rely on the specific statements that the Opposition references. Howmet relies on the underlying Exhibit 2004 in an effort to justify its sweeping discovery requests. Petitioner, by necessity, references that same argument to rebut Howmet's arguments.

Finally, the interest in maintaining confidentiality outweighs the strong public interest in having an open record. Specifically, the rules aim to balance "the public's interest in maintaining a complete and understandable file history" and "the parties' interest in protecting truly sensitive information." 77 Fed. Reg. 48,755, 48,760. The public's interest in maintaining a complete and understandable file history is satisfied when the parties file public versions of the documents with redactions limited to business confidential information, "so the record may remain clear and reasonably open." *Samsung et al. v. OuraRing, Inc.*, IPR2024-01077, Paper 47, at 58-59 (P.T.A.B. Dec. 15, 2025). Here, Petitioner will file a public copy of the Opposition with redactions limited to the confidential business information disclosed in Exhibit 2004. Therefore, the public interest is satisfied,

and this factor favors filing under seal.

III. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Petitioner respectfully requests that the Board grant its Motion to file the confidential version of its Opposition under seal.

Date: April 6, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned certifies that the foregoing document(s) were served on
April 6, 2026, at the following addresses:

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