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O **MAY 27 2026**
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

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SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

LEGAL IMPACT FOR CHICKENS,

CASE NO. CV2401841

Plaintiff,

RULING AND ORDER ON
DEFENDANTS' MOTIONS TO
QUASH FIVE SUBPOENAS

vs.

ALEXANDRE FAMILY FARM, LLC, et al.,

Defendants.

Presently before the Court is Defendants' motion to quash or limit five business records-only discovery subpoenas issued by Plaintiff to various county agencies: County of Humboldt Code Enforcement; County of Humboldt Sheriff's Department; County of Humboldt Department of Health and Human Services; County of Del Norte Sheriff's Office; and County of Del Norte Code Enforcement.

Defendants' motion was heard on March 20, 2026. Plaintiff appeared by attorneys Frank Martin and Isabella Nelson. Defendants appeared by attorneys John Lopez and Tamara Falor. The Court has considered Defendants' motion, declarations and points and authorities in support, Plaintiff's opposition, Defendants' reply, and oral argument at the hearing. The subpoenaed government agencies -- who are not parties to this action -- have not filed motions to quash, have

1 not objected, have not asserted any privilege, and have not moved to intervene.

2 All five subpoenas request the agencies produce the following documents:

3 Any and all reports and investigations involving animal abuse or animals owned by
4 Alexandre Family Farms, Stephanie Alexandre, Blake Alexandre, or Joseph
5 Alexandre, between January 1, 2020, and the present, including but not limited to
6 reports and investigations at the following locations:

7 The locations are then listed by farm or ranch name, varying as to whom the records
8 subpoena is directed.

9 Defendants and moving parties first argue that the documents sought are not relevant to
10 any issue raised in this litigation, as this action cannot, as a matter of law, be maintained.

11 Plaintiff alleges two causes of action against the defendant Alexandre Family Farm, LLC
12 and three individuals (collectively referred to as Alexandre): first, for declaratory and injunctive
13 relief under Corporations Code section 10404 (complaint ¶¶220-253); and second, for
14 declaratory and injunctive relief under Corporations Code section 14501 (complaint, ¶¶254 et
15 seq.). Plaintiff alleges that Alexandre violated California's animal anti-cruelty laws in Penal
16 Code sections 597 et seq. (see, e.g., complaint ¶¶226-232), as well as industry standards for
17 treatment of farm animals (see, e.g., complaint ¶¶ 178-195).

18 Plaintiff alleges that it is organized as a non-profit corporation and a humane society
19 under section 10400 as a corporation for the prevention of cruelty to animals ("SPCA"). Plaintiff
20 does not allege that it is or has a humane officer as defined in section 14502.

21 The basis for Plaintiff's first cause of action is section 10404, which provides:

22 Any such corporation [i.e., an SPCA], or humane officer thereof, may proffer a
23 complaint against any person, before any court or magistrate having jurisdiction,
24 for the violation of any law relating to or affecting animals and may aid in the
25 prosecution of the offender before the court or magistrate.

26 Corp. Code §10404.

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1 Corporations Code section 10405 provides:

2 All magistrates, sheriffs, and officers of police shall, as occasion may require, aid
3 any such corporation [i.e., an SPCA], its officers, members, and agents, in the
enforcement of all laws relating to or affecting animals.

4 Corp. Code §10405.

5 These statutes authorize an SPCA such as Legal Impact for Chickens (or,
6 alternatively, a humane officer of an SPCA) to “proffer” a complaint for violations of state and
7 local laws enacted for the protection of animals. *Animal Legal Defense Fund v. Mendes* (2008)
8 160 Cal.App.4th 136, 142–143 (“ALDF”).

9 As to both causes of action, this Court previously found that Civil Code section 3369 is
10 not a bar. Civil Code section 3369 provides:

11 Neither specific nor preventive relief can be granted to enforce a penalty or
12 forfeiture in any case, nor to enforce a penal law, except in a case of nuisance or
as otherwise provided by law.

13 Civ. Code, § 3369.

14 The Court has previously found that the complaint meets the criteria in *Leider v. Lewis*
15 (2017) 2 Cal.5th 1121, 1136, for coming under the phrase “as otherwise provided by law” in
16 Civil Code section 3369. The Court also previously found that the complaint alleges sufficient
17 facts to establish this Court’s jurisdiction over the dispute, to establish standing of the plaintiff,
18 to state a cause of action for injunctive and declaratory relief under Corporations Code sections
19 10404 and 14501, and is not barred solely because dates of all the events were not alleged.¹

20 The Court finds that the documents sought by the subpoenas are directly relevant to the
21 allegations in the complaint. The Court further finds that the subpoenas are not overbroad, as
22 they are limited to records of animals abused by or owned by the named defendants in this
23 action: Alexandre Family Farms, Stephanie Alexandre, Blake Alexandre, or Joseph Alexandre.

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¹ To the extent Defendants invite the Court to exercise its inherent power to reconsider its ruling on Defendants’ demurrer, the Court declines to do so.

1 Insofar as the subpoenas seek documents that might involve confidential business
2 information or trade secrets, the Court finds that the stipulated Protective Order previously
3 entered in this matter will adequately protect those interests.

4 Finally, the Court has considered whether production of the requested documents is
5 barred by the official information privilege of Evidence Code section 1040. None of the agencies
6 whose records are sought – the holders of the privilege -- moved to quash the subpoenas or
7 otherwise intervene in this action, nor was the issue raised by the parties. Nonetheless, the Court
8 must consider whether the privilege applies here. *Union Bank of California v. Superior Court*
9 (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 378, 399 (“Even if a national bank had no authority to claim the SAR
10 [Suspicious Activity Report] privilege, a court would still be obliged to exclude information
11 subject to the privilege if no holder of the privilege was a party to the proceeding. (Evid. Code, §
12 916, subd. (a).)”).

13 The Court finds that the absolute privilege under Evidence Code section 1040(b)(1) does
14 not apply, as the Court is unaware of any statute or regulation creating an absolute bar to
15 disclosure of the documents sought. *Los Angeles Unified School Dist. v. Trustees of Southern*
16 *California IBEW-NECA Pension Plan* (2010) 187 Cal.App.4th 621, 630.

17 Turning to Evidence Code section 1040(b)(2), the “threshold determination” is whether
18 the information was acquired by the public agency in confidence; if so, then the court must
19 “balance the interests to determine whether the necessity for preserving the confidentiality of the
20 information outweighs the necessity for disclosure in the interest of justice.” *Marylander v.*
21 *Superior Court* (2000) 81 Cal.App.4th 1119, 1129.

22 The Court does not have any evidence before it that the documents or information sought
23 from the agencies was acquired by the agencies in confidence, other than Defendants’ argument
24 that the requested information constitutes trade secrets or confidential information. Assuming
25 the information was acquired by the agencies in confidence, the Court finds that the necessity for

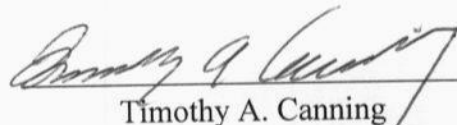
1 disclosure in light of the allegations of the complaint outweighs any confidentiality interests the
2 agencies may have, in the interests of justice. The requested records, if they exist, relate directly
3 to the allegations that Defendants violated California's animal cruelty laws by underfeeding
4 cattle, denying veterinary care, and selling abused cattle at auction. (Complaint, ¶¶205-219.)

5 For the foregoing reasons, and good cause appearing,

6 **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:**

- 7 1. The Court declines to reconsider its ruling on Defendants' demurrer;
- 8 2. Defendants' motion to quash the five records-only subpoenas which seek records of
9 animals abused by or owned by Alexandre Family Farms, Stephanie Alexandre,
10 Blake Alexandre, or Joseph Alexandre is denied;
- 11 3. Any documents or information produced in response to the five records-only
12 subpoenas are subject to the parties' Protective Order;
- 13 4. The parties' respective positions on this motion were substantially justified, and so
14 sanctions will not be awarded against any party;
- 15 5. The effective date of this order is stayed for fifteen days from the date it is served on
16 the parties.

17
18 Dated: May 26, 2026



Timothy A. Canning
Judge of the Superior Court

PROOF OF SERVICE BY MAIL

I am over 18 years of age, a resident of the County of Humboldt, State of California, and not a party to the within action; that my business address is Humboldt County Courthouse, 825 5th St., Eureka, California, 95501; that I served a true copy of the attached RULING AND ORDER ON DEFENDANTS' MOTIONS TO QUASH FIVE SUBPOENAS by placing said copies in the attorney's mail delivery box in the Court Operations Office at Eureka, California on the date indicated below, or by placing said copies in envelope(s) and then placing the envelope(s) for collection and mailing on the date indicated below. I am readily familiar with this business practice for collecting and processing correspondence for mailing. On the same day that correspondence is placed for collection and mailing, it is deposited with the United States Postal Service at Eureka, California in a sealed envelope with postage prepaid. These copies were addressed to:

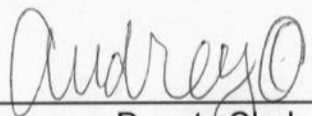
Legal Impact for Chickens, Court Operations Box #18

John Lopez, Court Operations Box #68

I declare under penalty of perjury, under the laws of the State of California, that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on the 27th day of May 2026, at the City of Eureka, California.

Meara C. Hattan, Court Executive Officer/Clerk

By 
Deputy Clerk