

News

BCLP TEAM SECURES VICTORY IN MISSOURI SUPREME COURT

Jan 09, 2024

BCLP successfully represented Tyler Technologies, Inc. in defense of a recently filed class action lawsuit. Jackson County, Missouri property owners filed a class action against Tyler Technologies Inc., Jackson County and several county officials alleging they acted unlawfully during the 2023 real property assessment process, resulting in illegal assessments. Prior to 2023, Tyler Technologies entered into a contract with the county to replace the county's computer-assisted appraisal system and provide the county with appraisal and reassessment services. The taxpayers alleged Tyler Technologies owed them a duty to use reasonable care when performing services pursuant to the contract. The taxpayers alleged Tyler Technologies' failure to perform its contractual obligations caused some taxpayers to not receive timely notice of increased assessments and caused other taxpayers to have their property assessments increase by more than 15 percent without a physical inspection, as required by statute. BCLP moved to dismiss the counts alleged against Tyler. The circuit court granted the motion except for two counts alleging negligence. On behalf of its client BCLP sought a preliminary writ prohibiting the circuit court from taking any further action other than dismissing the negligence counts. The primary argument was that Tyler owed no duty to plaintiffs because well-established Missouri law held that contracting parties owe no tort duties to noncontracting parties.

The Missouri Supreme Court unanimously agreed and held that imposing tort liability on Tyler Technologies would subject it to "excessive and unlimited liability" to a putative class consisting of an unknown number of individuals, corporations, and other legal entities owning real property located in the County, and would "disincentivize local government contractors from entering into service contracts by creating obligations and liabilities to others which parties would not voluntarily assume." The Missouri Supreme Court ordered the trial court to dismiss the negligence counts against Tyler Technologies with prejudice.

The BCLP team consisted of Kansas City Partners Robert Thompson and Robert Hoffman, along with Jefferson City attorney Jesus Osete, who presented oral argument to the Missouri Supreme Court.

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MEET THE TEAM



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