

Va. Jury Invalidates Elevated Stairs Patent Claims

By Adam Lidgett

Law360 (July 11, 2024, 7:13 PM EDT) -- A federal jury in Virginia has found that claims in an inventor's patent on elevated stairs are invalid, in a win for Mission Integrated Technologies.

The jury issued **its decision** Wednesday, finding that all the challenged claims of Joshua R. Clemente's patent at issue — U.S. Patent No. 11,174,677 — are invalid.

That amounted to more than a dozen claims that were invalidated, according to court records. That also meant the jury didn't have to figure out any damages, according to the jury record. The jury didn't give any reasoning behind its finding.

The dispute was over allegations that Mission Integrated Technologies infringed Clemente's patent.

The patent involves stairs mounted to vehicles that law enforcement officials use in rescue procedures, according to Clemente. He said the stairs are used to get into raised points of interest quickly, such as an airplane door.

The suit was initially filed by Mission Integrated Technologies in circuit court for Fairfax County, Virginia, but was sent to federal court in 2023, according to court documents. Those allegations included claims of fraud and breach of contract, according to court records.

Clemente, however, then filed a counterclaim — the patent infringement claim at issue.

"We are pleased that the jury reached a quick and decisive verdict so that our client can proceed with the sale of a product that will save many lives around the world," Laurin H. Mills of Werther & Mills LLC, an attorney for Mission Integrated Technologies, said in a statement.

Rebecca S. LeGrand of LeGrand Law PLLC, counsel for Clemente, declined to comment other than saying she was "honored to represent" her client.

The patent-in-suit is U.S. Patent No. 11,174,677 B2.

Mission Integrated Technologies is represented by Laurin H. Mills and Brian P. Donnelly of Werther & Mills LLC.

Clemente is represented by Rebecca S. LeGrand of LeGrand Law PLLC.

The case is Mission Integrated Technologies LLC et al. v. Clemente et al., case number 1:23-cv-01608, in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia.

--Editing by Stephen Berg.