

Whirlpool Wins \$7.6M Jury Verdict over Patent Infringement of Refrigerator Filters

An East Texas jury has awarded Whirlpool Corp. \$7.6 million, finding that a California company willfully infringed the patent protecting Whirlpool's replacement water filters for refrigerators.

The jury delivered the verdict against TST Water, LLC, on March 10 in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas in Marshall. The finding that the patent infringement was "willful" means the award total could be tripled, a decision to be made by Judge Rodney Gilstrap, according to a release from the firm.

Longview, Texas-based **Ward, Smith & Hill** founder Johnny Ward represented Whirlpool as lead counsel alongside attorneys from the San Francisco office of Morrison & Foerster LLP.

"The evidence clearly showed that TST Water willfully infringed Whirlpool's patent," said Ward. "The jury rightfully discounted TST's claims that the patent was invalid. The amount the jury awarded demonstrates that."

The lawsuit involved Whirlpool "Filter 3" refrigerator filters, which carry U.S. Patent No. 7,000,894. The company claimed TST Water intentionally copied the Filter 3 design in the development of its WSW-5 and HDX FMW-5 refrigerator filters, which were sold under the brand name WaterSentinel and the label "HDX." TST Water promoted the installation and use of the filters as an alternative to the Filter 3 in Whirlpool refrigerators.

The case is *Whirlpool Corporation v. TST Water, LLC*, case 2:15-cv-01528-JRG in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas.

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