ARBITRATION
AND
MEDIATION CENTER

WIPO
WORLD
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

The Southern Company v. Farhad Siddiqui
Case No. D2026-2455

1. The Parties

The Complainant is The Southern Company, United States of America (the "U.S."), represented by Allure Security Technology, Inc., U.S.

The Respondent is Farhad Siddiqui, Afghanistan.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <southerco.com> is registered with Sea Wasp, LLC (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on June 5, 2026. On June 8, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On June 15, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response, disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which differed from the named Respondent (Jewella Privacy - 1c895, Jewella Privacy LLC Privacy ID# 1055646) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on June 15, 2026, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on June 16, 2026.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Policy" or "UDRP"), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Rules"), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the "Supplemental Rules").

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on June 17, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was July 7, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on July 9, 2026.

The Center appointed Taras Kyslyy as the sole panelist in this matter on July 16, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the U.S. doing its business in energy sector.

The Complainant owns registrations for its SOUTHERN COMPANY mark, including for instance the U.S. registration No. 2163676, registered on June 9, 1998.

The disputed domain name was registered on October 12, 2005 and resolved to a parked webpage containing pay-per-click advertising links targeting the same industry in which the Complainant operates and including a direct reference to the Complainant's name. At the time of the Decision in this case the disputed domain name resolves to a webpage containing notice that the website is dangerous to visit as it may trick Internet users into installing software or revealing their information, such as passwords, phone number, or credit cards.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the disputed domain name.

Notably, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's trademark. The disputed domain name incorporates the SOUTHERN COMPANY marks and differs only by the omission of the letter "n" from "southern" and abbreviating "company" to "co." Such minor variations do not prevent a finding of confusing similarity. The resulting domain name preserves the commercial impression and pronunciation of the Complainant's mark and constitutes a classic typosquatting variation designed to exploit foreseeable typing errors by Internet users seeking the Complainant.

The Complainant also contends that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant, has never been licensed or authorized to use the SOUTHERN COMPANY marks, and is not commonly known by the disputed domain name. There is no evidence that the Respondent has made any legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. Instead, the disputed domain name has led to a PPC landing page displaying advertising links labeled "southerco.com." These links include references to "SOUTHERN COMPANY ENERGY SOLUTIONS" and "CHEAPEST ENERGY COMPANY", which correspond directly to the services for which the Complainant's SOUTHERN COMPANY trademarks are registered and used.

Finally, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. Given the distinctiveness of the Complainant's marks, their continuous use since at least 1976, and the Complainant's established presence in the energy sector, it is implausible that Respondent independently selected the disputed domain name without knowledge of the Complainant. The disputed domain name wholly incorporates the Complainant's mark and is registered after the mark becomes established. The timing of registration, in light of the Complainant's prior rights, supports a finding of bad faith registration. The inference of the Respondent's knowledge is reinforced by the use made of the disputed domain name leading to landing page displaying a pay-per-click advertising links targeting the same industry in which the Complainant operates and including a direct reference related to "SOUTHERN COMPANY ENERGY SOLUTIONS," corresponding directly to the services for which the Complainant's trademarks are registered and used. This demonstrates that the Respondent registered and is using the disputed domain name to trade on the goodwill associated with the Complainant's trademarks. Such use confirms both bad faith registration and bad faith use. The Respondent's bad faith is further demonstrated by the use of the disputed domain name to redirect Internet users to a deceptive "scareware" webpage. Rather than resolving to a legitimate business website or informational content, the disputed domain name redirects users to a page designed to generate alarm, confusion, or urgency through misleading security warnings, fraudulent system alerts, or similar deceptive content. The use of the disputed domain name confusingly similar to the Complainant's trademarks to divert users to such content demonstrates an intent to exploit user confusion for improper commercial or malicious purposes, which constitutes strong evidence of bad faith registration and use. Such use is plainly inconsistent with any conceivable good-faith offering of goods or services or any legitimate noncommercial use. Due to the visual and phonetic similarity of the typosquatted disputed domain name, official representatives of the Complainant, its subsidiaries, and state/federal regulatory bodies have repeatedly and mistakenly utilized email addresses utilizing the disputed domain name. The Respondent's passive holding and monetization of this typographical variant creates an ongoing risk that sensitive corporate or regulatory communications intended for the Complainant personnel may be misdirected to infrastructure controlled by the Respondent. By using the disputed domain name in this manner, the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract Internet users for commercial gain by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's trademark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the website.

B. Respondent

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant's contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("WIPO Overview 3.1"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.2.1.

The Panel finds the mark is recognizable within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.7.

The Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

Although the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving that a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the difficult task of "proving a negative", requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name (although the burden of proof always remains on the complainant). If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.1.

Having reviewed the available record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant's prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

The use of a domain name to host a parked page comprising pay-per-click links does not represent a bona fide offering where such links compete with or capitalize on the reputation and goodwill of the complainant's mark or otherwise mislead Internet users. The Panel finds this applies to the present case. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.9.

The Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Panel notes that, for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular, but without limitation, that, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

In the present case, the Panel notes that the Respondent registered the disputed domain name confusingly similar to the Complainant's trademark and used it to for a page with the pay-per-click links competing with the Complainant. The Panel finds this confirms the Respondent knew and targeted the Complainant and its trademark while registering the disputed domain name, which is bad faith.

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive circumstances that may indicate that a domain name was registered and used in bad faith, but other circumstances may be relevant in assessing whether a respondent's registration and use of a domain name is in bad faith. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 3.2.1.

According to paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy the following circumstances, in particular but without limitation, if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith: by using the domain name, you have intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to your website or other online location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of your website or location or of a product or service on your website or location. Using the disputed domain name to host a parking page with pay-per-click links, the Respondent created a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's trademark and potentially obtained revenue from this practice. Under such circumstances the Panel finds that the disputed domain name was used in bad faith.

Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Respondent's registration and use of the disputed domain name constitutes bad faith under the Policy.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established the third element of the Policy.

7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name <southerco.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Taras Kyslyy/
Taras Kyslyy
Sole Panelist
Date: July 24, 2026