

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Culligan International Company v. 石军 (shijun)
Case No. D2026-3203

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Culligan International Company, United States of America ("United States"), represented by Baker & Hostetler LLP, United States.

The Respondent is 石军 (shijun), China.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <culliganwaterpitcher.com> is registered with Bangning Digital Technology Co.,Ltd (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed in English with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on July 21, 2026. On July 21, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On July 23, 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 (Unknown Respondent c/o Bangning Digital Technology Co., Ltd., Registrar) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on July 23, 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 amendment to the Complaint in English on July 23, 2026.

On July 23, 2026, the Center informed the Parties, in Chinese and English, that the language of the Registration Agreement for the disputed domain name is Chinese. On the same day, the Complainant confirmed its request that English be the language of the proceeding. The Respondent did not submit any comment on the Complainant's submission.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amendment to the 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 in Chinese and English of the Complaint, and the proceeding commenced on July 24, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was August 13, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on August 14, 2026.

The Center appointed Sebastian M.W. Hughes as the sole panelist in this matter on August 14, 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

A. Complainant

The Complainant is a company founded in 1936 and headquartered in the United States, providing a wide range of water filtration, softening, and drinking products under the trade marks CULLIGAN and CULLIGAN WATER (the "Trade Mark(s)") to customers in numerous countries worldwide, including via its website "www.culligan.com".

The Complainant is the owner of several registrations for the Trade Marks in the United States, including registration No. 1,008,612 for the Trade Mark CULLIGAN, with a registration date of April 8, 1975; and registration No. 5,950,322 for the Trade Mark CULLIGAN WATER, with a registration date of December 31, 2019.

B. Respondent

The Respondent is reportedly an individual located in China.

C. The Disputed Domain Name

The disputed domain name was registered on December 26, 2025.

D. Use of the Disputed Domain Name

The disputed domain name has previously been used in respect of an English language website, prominently featuring the Trade Marks and the Complainant's corporate livery and copyright images copied from the Complainant's Website, and purportedly offering the Complainant's Culligan and Culligan Water products at discounted prices (the "Respondent's Website").

As of the date of this Decision, the disputed domain name no longer resolves to an active website.

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 has been registered and used by the Respondent in bad faith in respect of the Respondent's Website.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

Language of the Proceeding

The language of the Registration Agreement for the disputed domain name is Chinese. Pursuant to the Rules, paragraph 11(a), in the absence of an agreement between the parties, or unless specified otherwise in the registration agreement, the language of the administrative proceeding shall be the language of the registration agreement.

The Complaint was filed in English. The Complainant requested that the language of the proceeding be English for several reasons, including the fact that the Respondent's Website was in the English language.

The Respondent did not make any specific submissions with respect to the language of the proceeding.

In exercising its discretion to use a language other than that of the registration agreement, the Panel has to exercise such discretion judicially in the spirit of fairness and justice to both parties, taking into account all relevant circumstances of the case, including matters such as the parties' ability to understand and use the proposed language, time and costs (see WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions (["WIPO Overview 3.1"](#)), section 4.5.1).

Having considered all the matters above, the Panel determines under paragraph 11(a) of the Rules that the language of the proceeding shall be English.

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 Trade Marks and the disputed domain name. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of Trade Marks or service marks for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.2.1.

The entirety of the Trade Marks is reproduced within the disputed domain name. Accordingly, the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Trade Marks for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.7.

Although the addition of other terms (here, "pitcher") may bear on assessment of the second and third elements, the Panel finds the addition of such terms does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity between the disputed domain name and the Trade Marks for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.8.

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.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity (here, claimed as passing off), can never confer rights or legitimate interests on a respondent. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.13.1.

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 light of the manner of use of the disputed domain name in respect of the Respondent’s Website, noting also that the term “pitcher” added to the Trade Marks in the disputed domain name is descriptive of the Complainant’s goods marketed and sold by the Complainant for many years under the Trade Marks, the Panel finds that bad faith has been established under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

Panels have held that the use of a domain name for illegal activity (here, claimed as passing off) constitutes bad faith. [WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 3.4. 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 fact that the disputed domain name no longer resolves to an active website does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the circumstances of this case.

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 <culliganwaterpitcher.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Sebastian M.W. Hughes/

Sebastian M.W. Hughes

Sole Panelist

Date: August 14, 2026