

Recycler seeks to recoup \$2.4M in phony coin case

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PITTSBURGH — Coin recycler and exporter Wealthy Max Ltd. is seeking dismissal of a case brought against it by federal prosecutors alleging the company participated in a scheme to defraud the U.S. Mint of nearly \$5.5 million using counterfeit coins.

The Hong Kong-based company has filed a motion to dismiss a civil forfeiture case filed in U.S. District Court in New Jersey by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Newark earlier this year, which claimed that Wealthy Max and several other recycling companies attempted to pass counterfeit U.S. coins through the U.S. Mint's program (amm.com, March 31).

The company is attempting to recover \$2,388,091 from the U.S. Treasury for coins submitted to the U.S. Mint's Mutilated Coin Redemption Program, according to Washington-based law firm GeyerGorey LLP, which is representing Wealthy Max in the case.

"We are filing the motion to dismiss on behalf of Wealthy Max because we believe the complaint brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office has a number of errors relating both to points of law as well as to misunderstandings about our client's business," attorney Bradford L. Geyer said in a statement.

The law firm noted that the original complaint expressed doubts that Wealthy Max and other recycling companies with links to China could source the number of coins claimed through scrap metal exported from the United States to China, thus "demonstrating a lack of understanding of the scale and organization of the Chinese metal recycling industry."

"You could never guess from the complaint that Wealthy Max has an unblemished past performance record that spans 13 years with over 150 shipments accepted by the U.S. Mint and converted into coin roll. What we have as a matter of public record is one alleged non-conforming shipment awash in a 13-year sea of conforming shipments from a responsive government contractor with an unblemished past performance record," said Geyer.

A spokesman from the U.S. Attorney's Office declined to comment on the matter.

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