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23rd Psalm Trucking, L.L.C. v. Madison Parish Police Jury

Supreme Court of Louisiana - June 27, 2025 - So.3d - 2025 WL 1788077 - 2024-00808 (La. 6/27/25)

Garbage collection company brought action against parish police jury for breach of contract and unfair trade practices after police jury terminated company's residential waste collection and disposal contract early.

The District Court granted police jury's motion for summary judgment. Company appealed, and the Second Circuit Court of Appeal affirmed. Company petitioned for certiorari review.

The Supreme Court held that:

- Police jury lacked authority to enter into trash disposal contract absent approval by the State Bond Commission or a non-appropriation clause in the contract, and
- Company did not detrimentally rely upon unequivocal advice from an unusually authoritative source.

Police jury lacked authority to enter into four-year, residential waste collection and trash disposal contract with garbage collection company absent approval by the State Bond Commission or a non-appropriation clause in the contract that would allow the police jury to terminate the contract for lack of funding without a penalty.

Garbage collection company did not detrimentally rely upon unequivocal advice from an unusually authoritative source, and thus could not maintain detrimental reliance claim against parish police jury following early termination of garbage collection contract, where company had the opportunity before executing the contract to seek legal advice from an attorney on the laws applicable to contracting with the police jury, but did not, and neither the police jury nor its attorney issued a legal opinion relating to the contract prior to signing it.

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