

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BEFORE THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION**

COMMISSIONERS: **Andrew N. Ferguson, Chairman**
 Mark R. Meador

In the Matter of

Eusebio Juarez-Rufino,

Appellant

DOCKET NO. 9444

**ORDER PARTIALLY STAYING ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE’S DECISION,
GRANTING REVIEW, AND TO SHOW CAUSE**

Appellant Eusebio Juarez-Rufino is a horse trainer covered by the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act, 15 U.S.C. ch. 57A (“the Act”). On October 2, 2025, a neutral arbitrator determined that Mr. Juarez-Rufino had violated Anti-Doping and Medication Control Program Rule 3214(a)’s prohibition against possession of a banned substance. That Rule was previously proposed by the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (“the Authority”) and approved by the Commission in accordance with the Act.

The arbitrator concluded that Mr. Juarez-Rufino had been found in possession of Diisopropylamine, a banned substance, and therefore awarded the following sanctions against him: (1) a two-year period of ineligibility, (2) a fine of \$10,000, and (3) a contribution of \$8,000 towards the Horseracing Integrity & Welfare Unit’s (“HIWU”) share of the arbitration costs. Mr. Juarez-Rufino timely filed a petition for review before an administrative law judge (“ALJ”). *See* 15 U.S.C. § 3058(b)(1). HIWU did not, and indeed could not, cross-appeal. On April 28, 2026, the ALJ affirmed the finding of liability, including the two-year period of ineligibility and the award of \$8,000 in litigation costs. *In re Eusebio Juarez-Rufino*, No. 9444, 2026 WL 1456140, at *27 (F.T.C. A.L.J. Apr. 28, 2026). But the ALJ set aside and modified the fine imposed on Mr. Juarez-Rufino, increasing the fine from \$10,000 to \$25,000. Mr. Juarez-Rufino timely petitioned the Commission. *Id.*

Following the ALJ’s decision, the Commission completed its review in the matter of Philip Serpe, Docket No. 9441. The Commission held that, absent extraordinary circumstances, an ALJ may only grant the relief requested by the applicant for review and may not alter a judgment to benefit a nonappealing party. *In re Philip Serpe*, No. 9441, 2026 WL 1906387, at *11 (F.T.C. June 30, 2026). The Commission therefore granted Mr. Juarez-Rufino’s petition, vacated the ALJ’s April 28, 2026, decision, and remanded the matter for further consideration. *In re Eusebio Juarez-Rufino*, No. 9444, 2026 WL 2150295, at *1 (F.T.C. July 22, 2026). On remand, the ALJ again increased Mr. Juarez-Rufino’s fine from \$10,000 to \$25,000. *In re Eusebio Juarez-Rufino*, No. 9444, 2026 WL 2690134, at *8 (F.T.C. A.L.J. Sept. 4, 2026).

The Act provides that “[t]he Commission may, on its own motion, review any decision of an administrative law judge” by providing notice to the parties within 30 days of the administrative law judge’s decision. *See* 15 U.S.C. § 3058(c)(1). The Commission is exercising that option here to *sua sponte* review the September 4 decision.

Upon consideration of the record, the Commission is of the preliminary view that the decision may be subject to summary reversal because the merits are so clear that expedited action is justified and full briefing is unnecessary. The parties are directed to show cause no later than October 15, 2026, why the Commission should not summarily reverse the portion of the decision setting aside the \$10,000 fine and imposing a \$25,000 fine in its place. Any response shall not exceed 7,500 words and shall be limited to the sole question of whether the ALJ erred in increasing the final civil sanction imposed by the Authority through the arbitrator. The parties shall not file reply briefs unless otherwise ordered.

If no party files a timely response, or if the responses received do not present grounds sufficient to preclude summary action, the Commission may reverse the portion of the September 4 decision increasing the fine without further briefing or argument.

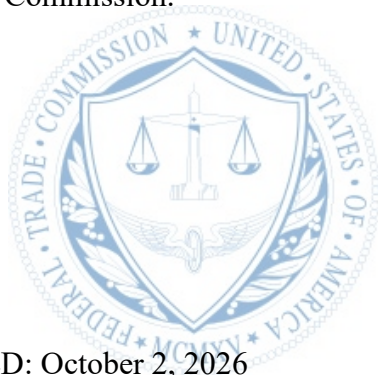
Conclusion

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the \$25,000 fine imposed by the ALJ is **STAYED** pending further review by the Commission.

On the Commission’s own motion, review of this matter by the Commission is **GRANTED**.

If a party chooses to file a response to the Commission’s order to show cause, such response must be filed by October 15, 2026.

By the Commission.



SEAL:
ISSUED: October 2, 2026

April J. Tabor
Secretary