

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

KING MOUNTAIN TOBACCO
COMPANY, INC.,

Defendant.

NO: 1:14-CV-3162-RMP

ORDER REGARDING UNITED
STATES' MOTION TO DISMISS,
MOTION FOR SUMMARY
JUDGMENT, MOTION TO STRIKE
REPLY BRIEF, AND MOTION TO
STRIKE JURY DEMAND; AND
KING MOUNTAIN'S MOTIONS FOR
DISCOVERY

BEFORE THE COURT are four motions filed by the United States: a Motion for Summary Judgment, **ECF No. 15**; a Motion to Dismiss Counterclaim, **ECF No. 14**; a Motion to Strike Jury Demand, **ECF No. 22**; and a Motion to Strike Reply Memorandum, **ECF No. 37**. Also before the Court are two motions for discovery filed by King Mountain Tobacco Co., Inc.: a Rule 56(d) Motion in Opposition to United States of America's Motion for Summary Judgment, **ECF No. 23**; and a Motion in Support of Defendant's Essential Right to Conduct Discovery, **ECF No. 25**. The Court heard oral argument on the motions on June

1 18, 2015. Trial Attorney Kenneth Sealls appeared on behalf of the United States,
2 and Randolph Barnhouse appeared on behalf of King Mountain. The Court has
3 reviewed the motions, considered the parties' arguments, and is fully informed.

4 **BACKGROUND**

5 **A. Factual Background**

6 On October 30, 2014, the United States, on behalf of the Commodity Credit
7 Corporation ("CCC") of the United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA"),
8 filed a complaint against King Mountain Tobacco Co., Inc. ("King Mountain") to
9 recover unpaid assessments mandated by the Fair and Equitable Tobacco Reform
10 Act of 2004, codified at 7 U.S.C. §§ 518-519a ("FETRA"). ECF No. 1 at 1-2.
11 FETRA provided for tobacco farmers to receive annual payments over a period of
12 ten years, for fiscal years 2005 – 2014, from the Secretary of Agriculture
13 ("Secretary"), "in exchange for the termination of tobacco marketing quotas and
14 related price support." § 518a(a); *see* §§ 518a, 518b; FETRA, Pub. L. No. 108-
15 357, secs. 611, 612, 118 Stat. 1418 (terminating the Federal Tobacco Quota and
16 Price Support programs).

17 To fund these payments, FETRA directed the Secretary to impose quarterly
18 assessments during the same time period on tobacco product manufacturers and
19 importers. § 518d(b). The Secretary determined the amount of each
20 manufacturer's quarterly assessment by first calculating the amount necessary to

1 cover all contract payments for the quarter, then allocating that amount among six
2 classes of tobacco products, and then dividing each class's portion among the
3 manufacturers and importers of that product class based on their respective market
4 share of gross domestic volume. §§ 518d(b)(2), (c), (e), (f).

5 After calculating a manufacturer's assessment for a given quarter, FETRA
6 required the Secretary to notify the manufacturer of the amount to be assessed at
7 least thirty days before the payment date. § 518d(d)(1). If a manufacturer wished
8 to "contest an assessment," it could do so by notifying the Secretary within thirty
9 days after receiving the assessment notification. § 518d(i)(1). Specifically, 7
10 C.F.R. § 1463.11 required a manufacturer to submit a written statement setting
11 forth the basis of the dispute to the Executive Vice President of CCC. 7 C.F.R. §
12 1463.11(a).

13 The Executive Vice President would then assign a person to act as the
14 hearing officer on behalf of CCC to develop an administrative record that would
15 provide the Executive Vice President with sufficient information to render a final
16 determination on the matter in dispute. § 1463.11(b). The agency could revise an
17 assessment if the manufacturer successfully established that the "initial
18 determination of the amount of an assessment [was] incorrect." 7 U.S.C. §
19 518d(i)(3). Any manufacturer who was "aggrieved by a determination of the
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1 Secretary with respect to the amount of any assessment” could seek judicial review
2 of the Secretary’s determination. 7 U.S.C. § 518d(j)(1); 7 C.F.R. § 1463.11(d).

3 The administrative record in this case contains the quarterly assessment
4 notifications, or invoices, that CCC sent to King Mountain between June 1, 2007,
5 and December 1, 2014. ECF No. 16. CCC sent King Mountain two invoices for
6 each quarter: one based on King Mountain’s manufacture of cigarettes and one
7 based on its manufacture of roll your own tobacco. Each invoice stated the class of
8 tobacco product for which it applied and the total assessment owed by King
9 Mountain for that product. ECF No. 16.

10 Additionally, each invoice provided the information necessary to understand
11 how the assessment amount was calculated: the total amount of money that CCC
12 needed to collect that quarter to fully fund its annual payments to tobacco farmers;
13 the percentage of sales in each product class; the proportionate amount of money
14 that CCC needed to collect for each product class; the total amount of taxes paid by
15 all tobacco manufacturers on the product class to which the invoice pertained; the
16 amount of taxes that King Mountain paid on the product class to which the invoice
17 pertained; King Mountain’s percentage of the total amount of paid taxes on the
18 applicable product class; and finally, the amount of King Mountain’s total
19 quarterly assessment, calculated by multiplying King Mountain’s “share,” or
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1 percentage of total taxes paid in that product class, by the total amount of money
2 that CCC needed to collect on that class. ECF No. 16.

3 The administrative record indicates that, on numerous occasions, King
4 Mountain either only partially paid a quarterly assessment or neglected to pay the
5 assessment entirely. ECF No. 16. The United States notes that King Mountain
6 made fourteen payments on the assessments between June 2007 and September
7 2010. ECF No. 15 at 6. Since September 2010, King Mountain has not made any
8 payments. ECF No. 15 at 6; ECF No. 16. USDA sent King Mountain thirty
9 separate demand letters between July 15, 2009, and November 15, 2014. ECF No.
10 16. During that time, King Mountain's alleged owed balance increased from
11 \$472,794.22 to \$6,373,275.29. ECF No. 16.

12 The record also shows that King Mountain objected to the assessments on
13 several occasions. In February of 2012, King Mountain contacted the Receivable
14 Management Office ("RMO") of the Farm Service Agency ("FSA") within USDA
15 and informed Judy Curtis, an RMO employee and the point of contact listed on the
16 demand letters, that King Mountain was disputing its assessment. ECF No. 16,
17 KM-AR-000101. The outcome of that contact is unclear.

18 On March 15, 2012, King Mountain's counsel contacted FSA again to
19 dispute the assessments. ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000189. In a follow-up e-mail to
20 another FSA employee, Julianna Young, King Mountain disputed that it owed

1 \$1,519,547.71, confirmed that King Mountain's counsel's telephone conversation
2 with Ms. Young qualified as notice of appeal as required under the statute, and
3 informed FSA that to the extent the assessments were predicated on taxes owed by
4 King Mountain, King Mountain was currently in litigation disputing those tax
5 assessments. ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000189. Ms. Young did not respond to King
6 Mountain's e-mail until eleven days later, at which time she stated that her
7 "supervisor is coordinating with our [Tobacco Transition Assistance Program]
8 folks," and she believed that "at some point some guidance will come back to
9 [her]." ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000189. There is no evidence in the record that Ms.
10 Young or any other FSA employee reengaged King Mountain on the issue.

11 Subsequently, it appears that counsel for King Mountain and Ms. Young had
12 a telephone conversation on July 6, 2012, in which King Mountain demanded the
13 return of \$75,000 which the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
14 had agreed to give King Mountain as part of a settlement agreement in a separate
15 excise tax case, but which FSA confiscated and applied as an "offset" to King
16 Mountain's unpaid FETRA assessments. ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000098. Ms.
17 Young allegedly informed King Mountain for the first time that assessment
18 disputes should be directed to Jane Reed. ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000099. King
19 Mountain objected to never having been directed to contact Jane Reed previously,
20 and reminded Ms. Young of her representation that the March telephone

1 conversation constituted sufficient notice of intent to dispute the assessments. ECF
2 No. 16, KM-AR-000099.

3 Larry Durant, Chief of RMO, responded by e-mail on July 12, 2012, to King
4 Mountain's letter dated July 9, 2012. He did not address King Mountain's
5 objection to the assessments, stating only that the "Receivable Management Office
6 does not handle dispute request [sic]." ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000101. Mr. Durant
7 stated that the \$75,000 confiscation was "in compliance with DCIA regulations,"
8 and refused to return the funds to King Mountain. ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000101.

9 King Mountain responded to Mr. Durant on August 7, 2012. ECF No. 16,
10 KM-AR-000103. King Mountain reiterated its position that the confiscation was
11 wrongful, that FSA had failed to adequately inform King Mountain of available
12 administrative remedies, and that the outcome of King Mountain's litigation
13 against the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives would directly
14 affect the validity of the assessments. ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000103.

15 On September 17, 2012, King Mountain mailed an appeal letter to CCC and
16 the Economic and Policy Analysis Staff ("EPAS") of FSA, disputing the Notice of
17 Acceleration or Revision letter, dated August 16, 2012, which asserted that King
18 Mountain owed \$3,033,625.80 under the Tobacco Transition Assessment Program
19 ("TTAP") and informed King Mountain that amount would be placed in DOJ
20 litigation status. ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000104. King Mountain also requested a

1 hearing before CCC. ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000104. King Mountain argued that
2 the Yakama Treaty of 1855 prohibited the assessments on King Mountain's
3 tobacco products and requested that "all payments made under TTAP assessments
4 be returned to it, as well as funds illegally offset by the [FSA]." ECF No. 16, KM-
5 AR-000106. Additionally, King Mountain disputed the offset because it received
6 no notice of the offset action or any information regarding when it occurred. ECF
7 No. 16, KM-AR-000107.

8 Juan Garcia, the Executive Vice President of CCC, responded to King
9 Mountain's appeal letter on October 12, 2012. ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000108. Mr.
10 Garcia informed King Mountain that "appeal rights for that issue extend only to
11 contesting the accuracy of the amount of the debt due," and that appeal rights
12 pertaining to any previous quarterly assessment had "expired long ago." ECF No.
13 16, KM-AR-000108. Mr. Garcia determined that the total amount of debt owed
14 had been accurately calculated, and therefore denied King Mountain's appeal.
15 ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000108. Mr. Garcia noted that King Mountain had
16 requested an in-person administrative hearing, but denied the request as untimely.
17 ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000108. Finally, Mr. Garcia stated that "the assessments
18 related to this appeal are administratively final," and reiterated: "This is the final
19 administrative decision with regard to this appeal." ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000108.

1 King Mountain mailed and e-mailed a second notice of appeal to EPAS on
2 April 10, 2013, contesting the assessments appearing on invoices dated March 1,
3 2013. ECF No. 16, KM-AR-000110. King Mountain raised the same arguments
4 in objection to the assessments and the offset action. ECF No. 16, KM-AR-
5 000110. This time King Mountain attached several supporting documents,
6 including the Treaty of 1855 and King Mountain's complaint to enforce its treaty
7 rights filed against the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau. ECF No. 16,
8 KM-AR-000110. The United States admits that FSA did not respond to King
9 Mountain's second letter of appeal. ECF No. 33 at 7.

10 The United States alleges that King Mountain's outstanding balance totals
11 \$6,372,209.67, including late payment interest, and seeks a judgment in its favor
12 for the outstanding balance as well as any "assessments, interest, and/or reporting
13 penalties that have become delinquent since September 2014, and that do become
14 delinquent pending the resolution of this action, and interest from the date of the
15 judgment" ECF No. 1 at 5.

16 King Mountain filed an answer and counterclaim seeking a declaratory
17 judgment that imposing FETRA assessments on King Mountain violates the 1855
18 Yakama Treaty and is therefore prohibited. ECF No. 10.¹ King Mountain also

19 ¹ Although King Mountain also pleaded in its answer that the FETRA assessments
20 violate the Constitution and the General Allotment Act, King Mountain has not

1 seeks a refund of all assessments paid and an abatement of any assessment
2 payments still due. ECF No. 10.

3 **B. Legal Posture**

4 *i. Administrative Procedure Act*

5 There are several threshold issues before the Court. First, the Court must
6 determine whether the Administrative Procedure Act (“APA”) applies to the
7 Court’s review in this case. The United States contends that this case requires
8 “judicial review of agency action” under FETRA, subject to the Administrative
9 Procedure Act (“APA”). ECF No. 32 at 2-3. King Mountain contends that this

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11 argued those claims in its responses to the United States’ Motion to Dismiss or the
12 United States’ Motion for Summary Judgment. After the briefing period on the
13 United States’ motions had concluded, King Mountain filed a motion for summary
14 judgment on its counterclaim, arguing that the FETRA assessments violate the
15 Takings Clause of the Constitution. ECF No. 41. The briefing period for that
16 motion has not yet concluded. King Mountain does not argue in that motion that
17 the FETRA assessments are prohibited under the General Allotment Act.

18 Accordingly the Court treats the General Allotment Act defense and counterclaim
19 as having been abandoned. The Court reserves ruling on the Takings Clause
20 defense and counterclaim pending completed briefing.

1 case is “not an administrative appeal. It is an original action to collect an
2 assessment.” ECF No. 25 at 1. King Mountain notes that in its complaint, the
3 United States made no mention of King Mountain’s attempts to contest the
4 assessments at the agency level, or of the agency’s final determination that King
5 Mountain’s assessments were accurately calculated. ECF No. 25 at 4. Therefore,
6 King Mountain argues, the APA does not apply to this case. ECF No. 25 at 4.
7 Additionally, King Mountain argues that FETRA provides a right of judicial
8 review to an aggrieved party, not the government. ECF No. 25 at 4-5.

9 The APA provides a right of review to a “person suffering legal wrong
10 because of agency action, or adversely affected or aggrieved by agency action
11 within the meaning of a relevant statute” 5 U.S.C. § 702. This provision
12 applies unless the relevant statute precludes judicial review, or by law, agency
13 action is committed to agency discretion. § 701(a). The APA defines “person” as
14 “an individual, partnership, corporation, association, or public or private
15 organization other than an agency.” § 551(2).

16 FETRA and the implementing Code of Federal Regulations provide for
17 judicial review of adverse agency determinations. 7 U.S.C. § 518d(i); 7 C.F.R. §
18 1463.11(d). Thus, under the plain language of the APA, the APA would apply had
19 King Mountain, a person under the APA, sought judicial review of FSA’s final
20 determination that the assessments imposed against it were accurate. *See Prime*

1 *Time Int'l Co. v. Vilsack*, 599 F.3d 678, 686 (D.C. Cir. 2010) (“USDA’s
2 determination of [the manufacturer’s] assessments for three quarters of FY 2005
3 was an adjudication, attendant to which [the manufacturer] had rights to an
4 administrative appeal and judicial review.”) (citing the APA, 5 U.S.C. § 551(7)).

5 The question is whether the APA also applies in this case where the agency
6 has filed suit against King Mountain to recover the unpaid assessments. The Fifth
7 Circuit Court of Appeals held that “[t]he fact that this suit is one brought by the
8 government for judicial enforcement rather than one brought by a citizen to
9 challenge agency action, does not mean that judicial review of the agency’s action
10 in this suit is not pursuant to the APA.” *United States v. Menendez*, 48 F.3d 1401,
11 1410 (5th Cir. 1995).

12 Similarly, the Ninth Circuit has applied the APA to a defendant’s affirmative
13 defense raised in a criminal proceeding brought by the government, as well as to a
14 defendant’s counterclaim in a civil ejectment suit brought by the United States.
15 *United States v. Backlund*, 689 F.3d 986, 999-1001 (9th Cir. 2012); *Coleman v.*
16 *United States*, 363 F.2d 190, 196 (9th Cir. 1966), *rev’d on unrelated grounds*, 390
17 U.S. 599 (1968). Reason compels this result because a court’s failure to apply the
18 APA would incentivize parties not to pursue the administrative appeal process in
19 favor of judicial review, and thus undercut legislative intent to establish that
20 process. *See Backlund*, 689 F.3d at, 999-1001 (reasoning that “parties may not use

1 a collateral proceeding to end-run the procedural requirements governing appeals
2 of administrative decisions.”).

3 Regardless of whether the United States or King Mountain initiated this suit,
4 the APA applies and outlines the scope of the Court’s review, because the
5 imposition of FETRA assessments on King Mountain was appealable at the
6 administrative level. King Mountain has raised several affirmative defenses to
7 CCC’s collection action, and it has filed a counterclaim against CCC. ECF No. 10.
8 *Backlund* and *Coleman* apply and mandate that the APA applies to this action.

9 ii. *Exhaustion and Remand*

10 Having determined that the APA applies to this action, the Court considers
11 whether King Mountain adequately exhausted its administrative remedies.

12 The APA permits judicial review of a “final agency action for which there is
13 no other adequate remedy in a court” 5 U.S.C. § 704. “A reviewing court usurps
14 the agency’s function when it sets aside the administrative determination upon a
15 ground not theretofore presented” *Getty Oil Co. v. Andrus*, 607 F.2d 253, 256
16 (9th Cir. 1979) (quoting *Unemployment Comp. Comm’n of Territory of Alaska v.*
17 *Aragon*, 329 U.S. 143, 155 (1946)) (internal quotation marks omitted). “Thus,
18 absent exceptional circumstances, a reviewing court will refuse to consider
19 contentions not presented before the administrative proceeding at the appropriate
20 time.” *Getty Oil*, 607 F.2d at 256. The doctrine of exhaustion serves many

1 purposes, including enabling the agency to “function efficiently and so that it may
2 have the opportunity to correct its own errors, to afford the parties and the courts
3 the benefit of its experience and expertise, and to compile a record which is
4 adequate for judicial review.” *Weinberger v. Salfi*, 422 U.S. 749, 765 (1975).

5 However, the doctrine of exhaustion is “not designed to extinguish claims
6 which, although not comprehensively or artfully presented in the early stages of the
7 administrative process, are presented fully before the process ends.” *Getty Oil*, 607
8 F.2d at 256. “It is the imposition of an obligation or the fixing of a legal
9 relationship that is the indicium of finality of the administrative process.” *Id.*
10 “[W]here a claim is fully presented before the administrative process ends, the
11 doctrines of exhaustion and waiver are not applicable.” *Abel v. Dir., Office of*
12 *Workers Comp. Programs*, 939 F.2d 819, 821 (9th Cir. 1991).

13 The United States argues that King Mountain failed to exhaust its
14 administrative remedies with regard to all but two quarterly assessments because it
15 did not file an appeal every quarter during the entire assessment period. ECF No.
16 15 at 10. King Mountain argues that the imposition of any FETRA assessment
17 against it violates the 1855 Yakama Treaty. ECF No. 10. King Mountain also
18 argues that the assessment calculations are likely inaccurate because they do not
19 account for unreported cigarette production by other manufacturers. ECF No. 10
20 at 5; ECF No. 24 at 13-14; ECF No. 23 at 3-4.

1 King Mountain's argument regarding the Yakama Treaty need not have been
2 exhausted because CCC did not have authority to consider issues of treaty law.
3 The Supreme Court has stated that "[i]f treaties are to be given effect as federal law
4 under our legal system, determining their meaning as a matter of federal law is
5 emphatically the province and duty of our judicial department" *Sanchez-*
6 *Llamas v. Oregon*, 548 U.S. 331, 353-54 (2006) (citation and internal quotation
7 marks omitted). Similarly, the Ninth Circuit has held that "challenges to the
8 constitutionality of a statute or a regulation promulgated by an agency are beyond
9 the power or the jurisdiction of the agency," and need not be exhausted. *Gilbert v.*
10 *Nat'l Transp. Safety Bd.*, 80 F.3d 364, 366-67 (9th Cir. 1996); *see McCarthy v.*
11 *Madigan*, 503 U.S. 140, 147 (1992), *superseded by statute on unrelated grounds*.

12 In response to King Mountain's first appeal to the Executive Vice President
13 of CCC, Mr. Garcia informed King Mountain that "appeal rights for that issue
14 extend only to contesting the accuracy of the amount of the debt due." ECF No.
15 16, KM-AR-000108. Therefore, it appears that the agency limited its review to the
16 accuracy of assessment calculations and debt owed. Additionally, the United
17 States conceded during oral argument that the agency could not have considered
18 King Mountain's treaty claim at all. Therefore, the Court finds that King Mountain
19 need not have exhausted its claim regarding whether it is exempt from the
20 assessments under the Yakama Treaty, and the Court properly considers that

1 argument in the first instance, *infra*, as it pertains to all of the assessments imposed
2 against King Mountain.

3 Regarding King Mountain's second contention that the FETRA assessments
4 may be improperly calculated, King Mountain argues that it was denied the right to
5 administratively appeal its FETRA assessments because "USDA completely
6 faltered and miscommunicated with King Mountain during the administrative
7 appeal process." ECF No. 26 at 17. King Mountain filed at least two formal
8 appeals. In both appeal letters, King Mountain requested a hearing pursuant to 7
9 C.F.R. § 1463.11. It appears that CCC construed King Mountain's first appeal
10 letter as an appeal of King Mountain's total debt owed, rather than as an appeal of
11 the most recent assessment. KM-AR-000108 ("Your current appeal is predicated
12 on an August 16, 2012, Notice of Acceleration or Reversion letter."). Accordingly,
13 the agency denied King Mountain's request for a hearing as irrelevant to the
14 question of whether King Mountain's total unpaid assessments equaled the amount
15 of debt allegedly owed, and as untimely with regard to the accuracy of each
16 individual assessment comprising the total amount of debt owed. The agency did
17 not grant King Mountain a hearing to contest the most recent quarterly assessment,
18 nor did it explain why. CCC never responded to King Mountain's second request
19 for a hearing, despite King Mountain's explicit objection to "the amounts assessed
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1 dated March 1, 2013 for invoices CG12100004 in the amount of \$287,952.29 and
2 RY13100396 in the amount of \$280.61.” KM-AR-000110.

3 The United States conceded at oral argument that CCC never held a hearing
4 in response to King Mountain’s requests and that King Mountain was denied due
5 process. Both the United States and King Mountain concur that remand to the
6 agency is the appropriate remedy, to enable the agency to develop properly the
7 administrative record. Therefore, the Court will remand this case to CCC
8 regarding King Mountain’s claims that the assessment calculations are inaccurate
9 if this case survives King Mountain’s pending motion for summary judgment,
10 which is not yet ripe.

11 However, the Court must address whether, on remand, King Mountain is
12 entitled to challenge every assessment or only those assessments associated with its
13 first and second appeal letters, as the United States contends. Although King
14 Mountain’s first appeal letter was dated September 13, 2012, KM-AR-000104,
15 King Mountain attempted to contest the assessments as early as February 15, 2012.
16 KM-AR-000101; KM-AR-000189. It appears from the record that King Mountain
17 repeatedly received inaccurate and inconsistent information regarding how to
18 contest the assessments properly. In various communications with the agency
19 between February 15, 2012, and April 10, 2013, King Mountain contested a
20 demand letter, a letter notifying King Mountain of debt acceleration, and a

1 quarterly assessment for March 1, 2013. Each time, King Mountain contended that
2 all FETRA assessments, past, present, and future, were invalid as applied to it.
3 King Mountain's final letter was sent on April 10, 2013, to which King Mountain
4 never received a response.

5 The Court finds that King Mountain failed to exhaust its administrative
6 remedies prior to February 2012 because there is no evidence that King Mountain
7 attempted to challenge the assessments prior to that time. However, beginning in
8 February of 2012, King Mountain attempted to challenge the assessments in some
9 manner, yet was given inconsistent guidance regarding the process. After April 10,
10 2013, when King Mountain sent its final appeal letter, any future appeals by King
11 Mountain can be considered futile. The agency stated on October 12, 2012, in
12 response to King Mountain's first letter of appeal, that King Mountain's appeal
13 rights had expired, and subsequently failed to respond to King Mountain's second
14 appeal at all. *See McCarthy*, 503 U.S. at 148 ("[A]n administrative remedy may be
15 inadequate where the administrative body . . . has otherwise predetermined the
16 issue before it.").

17 Therefore, if the Court remands this case as stated, the scope of remand will
18 be limited to a determination of the accuracy of the FETRA assessments imposed
19 against King Mountain in or after February of 2012.

1 **C. Discovery**

2 *i. Motion to Strike Reply Brief*

3 King Mountain filed two motions for discovery requesting that the Court
4 order discovery prior to ruling on the United States' motions to dismiss and for
5 summary judgment. ECF Nos. 23 and 25. The United States moved to strike King
6 Mountain's reply brief to one of the motions for discovery because it was filed one
7 week late. ECF No. 37.² Although King Mountain disobeyed the Court's
8 Scheduling Order, the Court prefers to decide the issues on their merits, absent
9 some showing of prejudice to the opposing party. No prejudice having been found,
10 the Court denied the United States' motion to strike the reply brief.

11 *ii. Scope of Review*

12 The United States argues that the scope of the Court's review is limited to
13 the administrative record and that no discovery is warranted. ECF No. 32 at 3.
14 Additionally, the United States notes that this suit was brought pursuant to 15
15 U.S.C. § 714b(c), which gives CCC the power to "sue and be sued," and gives
16 federal district courts "exclusive original jurisdiction . . . of all suits brought by or
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18 ² The Court's scheduling order required King Mountain to file its reply brief to any
19 discovery motion no later than April 17, 2015. ECF No. 18 at 2. King Mountain
20 filed one of its reply briefs on April 24, 2015. ECF No. 36.

1 against the Corporation.” 15 U.S.C. § 714b(c). ECF No. 32 at 3. The United
2 States argues that because 15 U.S.C. § 714b(c) is “silent about the appropriate
3 standard of review . . . the Court’s review is limited to the administrative record.”
4 ECF No. 32 at 3 (citing *United States v. Carlo Bianchi & Co.*, 373 U.S. 709, 715
5 (1963)).

6 King Mountain argues that discovery is warranted on several bases: (1)
7 without discovery, King Mountain does not have the information it needs to fully
8 and completely present its claims and defenses; (2) the assessment calculations are
9 likely inaccurate because they do not account for unreported cigarette production
10 by other manufacturers, and discovery is likely to produce evidence of this
11 inaccuracy; (3) there is no exception in this case to the general rule requiring
12 discovery because this action is not a review of an administrative appeal but an
13 original action to collect an assessment; and (4) judicial estoppel prevents the
14 United States from arguing against the appropriateness of discovery in this case
15 because the United States previously represented in response to King Mountain’s
16 Motion for a More Definite Statement that King Mountain could obtain additional
17 information in discovery. King Mountain also maintains that the Court previously
18 recognized King Mountain’s right to conduct discovery when it denied King
19 Mountain’s motion for a more definite statement of the complaint and stated that
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1 King Mountain could obtain the additional details it sought through the discovery
2 process. ECF No. 25 at 2 (quoting ECF No. 9 at 8).³

3 Judicial review of action by an agency generally is confined to the
4 administrative record. *See Camp v. Pitts*, 411 U.S. 138, 142, (per curiam) (“[T]he
5 focal point for judicial review should be the administrative record already in
6 existence, not some new record made initially in the reviewing court.”). Thus,
7 actions for review on an administrative record normally are exempt from initial
8 disclosures under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Fed. R. Civ. P.
9 26(a)(1)(B). Additionally, the Supreme Court in *Carlo Bianchi* stated that “in
10 cases where Congress has simply provided for review, without setting forth the
11 standards to be used or the procedures to be followed, this Court has held that
12 consideration is to be confined to the administrative record and that no de novo
13 proceeding may be held.” *Carlo Bianchi*, 373 U.S. at 715

14 The Court already has determined that this case is subject to the APA. If the
15 case survives summary judgment and the Court remands the case to CCC for a
16 hearing on the accuracy of any assessments imposed after February 2012, no
17 discovery is warranted in this Court on King Mountain’s claim regarding the
18

19 ³ King Mountain may now obtain this additional information on remand before the
20 agency.

1 accuracy of the assessment calculations. However, the Court will not remand King
2 Mountain's treaty defense and counterclaim, and that argument need not be limited
3 to the administrative record because the agency neither had authority to consider
4 that claim nor addressed it. Therefore, the Court must decide whether discovery on
5 King Mountain's treaty claim is warranted on other grounds.

6 *iii. Relevance of Discovery*

7 Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26 states:

8 Parties may obtain discovery regarding any nonprivileged matter that
9 is relevant to any party's claim or defense For good cause, the
10 court may order discovery of any matter relevant to the subject matter
11 involved in the action. Relevant information need not be admissible
12 at the trial if the discovery appears reasonably calculated to lead to the
13 discovery of admissible evidence.

14 Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(b)(1). Thus, King Mountain is entitled to discovery on its treaty
15 claim if the discoverable information it seeks is relevant to the treaty counterclaim
16 or defense.

17 King Mountain maintains that the Court must permit discovery regarding
18 "the Yakama people's understanding of the terms" of the 1855 Yakama Treaty,
19 and then make findings of fact as to whether "the Treaty terms as understood by
20 the Yakama prevent the imposition of FETRA assessments on King Mountain . . .
." ECF No. 26 at 6-7. The United States contends that such discovery is
unnecessary because "King Mountain's defenses for non-payment of its statutory
FETRA assessments are meritless and should be summarily rejected" ECF

1 No. 30 at 1. Whether such discovery is relevant to King Mountain’s treaty
2 counterclaim and defense hinges on the standard of review applicable to this case,
3 which the parties dispute.

4 a. Standard of Review

5 In general, federal and state laws are presumed to apply to Indians absent an
6 exception. *Ramsey v. United States*, 302 F.3d 1074, 1078 (9th Cir. 2002) (noting
7 that “all citizens, including Indians, are subject to federal taxation unless
8 exempted” and quoting *Mescalero Apache Tribe v. Jones*, 411 U.S. 145, 148-49
9 (1973) (“Absent express federal law to the contrary, Indians going beyond
10 reservation boundaries have generally been held subject to nondiscriminatory State
11 law[s].”)); *Cree v. Waterbury*, 78 F.3d 1400, 1403 (9th Cir. 1996) [hereinafter
12 “*Cree I*”] (“State tax laws applied to Indians outside of Indian country, such as
13 those at issue here, are presumed valid ‘[a]bsent an express federal law to the
14 contrary.’”) (quoting *Mescalero*, 411 U.S. at 148-49); *United States v. Baker*, 63
15 F.3d 1478, 1484 (9th Cir. 1995) (“Federal laws of general applicability are
16 presumed to apply with equal force to Indians.”).

17 The applicable standard of review varies depending on whether the
18 contested law is state or federal. If the contested law is a state law, the court
19 presumes that the law is valid as applied to Indians “absent express federal law to
20 the contrary.” *Cree I*, 78 F.3d at 1403 (quoting *Mescalero*, 411 U.S. at 148-49)

1 (internal quotation marks omitted). “A treaty can constitute such an express
2 federal law.” *Id.* Whether a treaty exempts an Indian Tribe from a state law
3 depends on the parties’ intent when they entered the treaty. *Id.* at 1404. In
4 determining the parties’ intent, the Court must “examine the Treaty language as a
5 whole, the circumstances surrounding the Treaty, and the conduct of the parties
6 since the Treaty was signed” *Id.* at 1405.

7 Additionally, the Treaty “must be interpreted as the Indians would have
8 understood [it].” *Cree v. Flores*, 157 F.3d 762, 769 (9th Cir. 1998) [hereinafter
9 “*Cree II*”]. If the plain language of the treaty is ambiguous, then the Court
10 considers extrinsic evidence, resolving ambiguities in favor of the Indians. *King*
11 *Mountain Tobacco Co. v. McKenna*, 768 F.3d 989, 993 (9th Cir. 2014) (“[E]ven
12 though legal ambiguities are resolved to the benefit of the Indians, courts cannot
13 ignore plain language that, viewed in historical context and given a fair appraisal,
14 clearly runs counter to a tribe’s later claims.”); *United States v. Smiskin*, 487 F.3d
15 1260, 1264 (9th Cir. 2007) (“The text of a treaty must be construed as the Indians
16 would naturally have understood it at the time of the treaty, with doubtful or
17 ambiguous expressions resolved in the Indians’ favor.”).

18 In contrast, the federal government has greater power than the states to deal
19 with Indian tribes, and thus “all citizens, including Indians, are subject to federal
20 taxation [under federal law] unless expressly exempted.” *Ramsey*, 302 F.3d at

1 1078. Therefore, “[t]he federal standard requires a definite expression of
2 exemption stated plainly in a statute or treaty before any further inquiry is made or
3 any canon of interpretation employed.” *Ramsey*, 302 F.3d at 1076. The exemption
4 language “need not explicitly state that Indians are exempt from the specific tax at
5 issue; it must only provide evidence of the federal government’s intent to exempt
6 Indians from taxation.” *Ramsey*, 302 F.3d at 1078.

7 The *Ramsey* court provided several examples of express exemptive
8 language, including “free from incumbrance,” “free from taxation,” and “free from
9 fees.” *Ramsey*, 302 F.3d at 1078. “Only if express exemptive language is found in
10 the text of the statute or treaty should the court determine if the exemption applies
11 to the tax at issue.” *Id.* at 1079. The Court then considers whether the exemptive
12 language could be “reasonably construed” to support the claimed exemption. *Id.* at
13 1079. “[A]ny ambiguities as to whether the exemptive language applies to the tax
14 at issue should be construed in favor of the Indians.” *Id.* at 1079.

15 FETRA is a federal law. However, King Mountain contends that the
16 FETRA assessments are not taxes, but fees, and that, therefore, the state law
17 standard, rather than the federal standard, applies. ECF No. 24 at 5-8; ECF No. 26
18 at 7-10. The United States argues that, regardless of whether FETRA assessments
19 are taxes or fees, the Yakama Treaty does not exempt King Mountain from paying
20 its FETRA assessments. ECF No. 15 at 15-18; ECF No. 14 at 11-14.

1 King Mountain fails to cite any case law distinguishing a federal tax from a
2 federal fee for purposes of determining which standard to apply to an alleged
3 exemption. To the contrary, the *Ramsey* court used the terms “fee” and “tax”
4 interchangeably:

5 In fact, this Court recognized a distinction between the standard for
6 state *tax* exemptions and federal *tax* exemptions in *Cree I*: The State
7 argues that the *fees* ‘implement federal highway financing policy,’ and
8 that consequently the *fees* are valid unless the Treaty creates a
‘definitely expressed’ exemption. The State presents no authority for
this court to find that the state-imposed truck *fees* should be judged
according to the standard for federal *fees*.

9 *Ramsey*, 302 F.3d at 1078 (emphases added) (quoting *Cree I*, 78 F.3d at
10 1403 n.4) (internal quotation marks omitted).

11 King Mountain also fails to cite, nor is the Court aware of, any case law
12 post-*Ramsey* in which this circuit has applied the standard traditionally applied to
13 state laws to a federal law imposing a fee, rather than a tax. The Ninth Circuit in
14 *McKenna* generalized the two standards as applying either to state laws or to
15 federal laws when it stated that *Ramsey* explained “the differences between the
16 ‘express exemptive language’ test, which applies to federal laws, and the ‘express
17 federal law’ test, which applies to state laws.” *McKenna*, 768 F.3d at 994.

18 Similarly, the Ninth Circuit has applied the state law standard equally to
19 state laws imposing taxes, fees, and other regulatory measures under state law.
20 *See, e.g., McKenna*, 768 F.3d at 993 (applying state standard to state escrow fee);

1 *Smiskin*, 487 F.3d at 1264, 1266 (applying state standard to state notice
2 requirement and finding that “there is no basis in either the language of the Treaty
3 or our cases interpreting it for distinguishing restrictions that impose a fee from
4 those, as here, that impose some other requirement.”); *Cree II*, 157 F.3d at 769
5 (applying state standard to state license fees and permit requirements); *Cree I*, 78
6 F.3d at 1405 (remanding case and directing district court to apply state standard to
7 state license fees and permit requirements).⁴

8
9
10 ⁴ During oral argument, King Mountain stressed that the distinction between a fee
11 and a tax is relevant for other reasons, including that a fee may be considered an
12 unconstitutional taking, while a tax almost never is, and that a fee constitutes the
13 taking from citizen A to give to citizen B, whereas a tax is placed into a larger pool
14 of funds that may ultimately benefit Citizen A. However, King Mountain failed to
15 plead in response to the United States’ Motion to Dismiss that the FETRA
16 assessments constitute an unconstitutional taking. King Mountain raises that issue
17 in a Motion for Summary Judgment, which is not yet ripe. *See supra* note 1.

18 Whether the FETRA assessments solely benefit another citizen or ultimately
19 come back to benefit King Mountain in some way has no independent significance
20 under the terms of the Yakama Treaty. *See infra* part C.iii.b.

1 Although Ninth Circuit precedent may distinguish between a fee and a tax in
2 other areas of the law, any distinction between fees and taxes is irrelevant when
3 determining which standard applies to the interpretation of the Yakama Treaty in
4 this instance. FETRA is a federal law, and therefore the federal standard applies.
5 Accordingly, the Yakama Treaty must contain express exemptive language before
6 the Court can consider whether that exemptive language applies to FETRA
7 assessments, or consider extrinsic evidence, such as how the Yakama tribe may
8 have understood the Treaty terms.

9 b. Whether Discovery is Relevant Under the Federal Law
10 Standard

11 King Mountain argues that two Articles of the Yakama Treaty prohibit
12 imposition of FETRA assessments against it: Article II and Article III. Article II
13 of the Treaty describes the land that was reserved to the Yakama Nation and states
14 that the “tract shall be set apart and, so far as necessary, surveyed and marked out,
15 *for the exclusive use and benefit* of said confederated tribes and bands of Indians . .
16 . .” Treaty with the Yakamas, art. II, 12 Stat. 951 (1855) (emphasis added). King
17 Mountain argues that the language “for the exclusive use and benefit” evidences an
18 intent by the Treaty parties to prevent proceeds from the allotted land accruing to
19 any non-Indian party or government. ECF No. 24 at 11-12.

20 King Mountain made the same argument in its action seeking a declaratory
judgment that King Mountain was exempt from paying excise taxes on its

1 manufactured tobacco products, *King Mountain Tobacco Co. v. Alcohol and*
 2 *Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau*, 923 F.Supp.2d 1280, 1285-87 (E.D. Wa. 2013)
 3 [hereinafter “*King Mountain I*”], and as a defense to the United States’ action to
 4 recover those unpaid taxes, *King Mountain Tobacco Co. v. Alcohol and Tobacco*
 5 *Tax and Trade Bureau*, 996 F.Supp.2d 1061, 1068-70 (E.D. Wa. 2014) [hereinafter
 6 “*King Mountain II*”], *appeal docketed*, No. 14-35165 (9th Cir. Mar. 5, 2014).

7 In those cases, this Court determined that to the extent that the “exclusive
 8 use and benefit” language constitutes express exemptive language that exemption
 9 did not apply to King Mountain’s manufacture of tobacco products because of the
 10 Ninth Circuit’s limiting definition of that language. *King Mountain I*, 923
 11 F.Supp.2d at 1287. The Court stated:

12 The Ninth Circuit has had an opportunity to construe Article II’s
 13 “exclusive use and benefit” language. In *Hoptowit v. Comm’r of*
 14 *Internal Revenue*, 709 F.2d 564 (9th Cir.1983), an enrolled member of
 15 the Yakama Nation sought exemptions from federal income tax for
 16 income derived from a smoke shop operated on land within the
 Yakama Nation reservation and for per diem payments received for
 his work on the Yakama Nation Tribal Council. *Id.* at 565. He
 asserted that Article II’s “exclusive use and benefit” language was the
 source of the exemption. *Id.* at 565–66.

17 In reviewing the language of Article II, the court noted that
 18 language “gives to the Tribe the exclusive use and benefit *of the land*
 19 on which the reservation is located.” *Id.* The court concluded that
 “any tax exemption created by this language is limited to the income
 derived directly from the land.” *Id.*

20 This Court already has held that King Mountain does not enjoy an
 exemption from the federal excise tax on tobacco products under

1 *Capoeman* because the tax is not imposed on products directly derived
2 from the land. Therefore, to the degree that Article II contains express
3 exemptive language, the exemption to taxation created by Article II
4 would not apply to the facts of this case. *Id.* Accordingly, the
5 Plaintiff has failed to establish an exemption to the excise tax under
6 the Treaty.

7 *King Mountain I*, 923 F.Supp.2d at 1285-87.

8 The Court's reasoning in *King Mountain I* compels the same result in this
9 case. Like the excise taxes in *King Mountain I*, the FETRA assessments were
10 calculated based on the quantity of manufactured cigarettes and roll your own
11 tobacco that King Mountain placed into the market. King Mountain's market share
12 ultimately determined the amount of King Mountain's FETRA assessments. The
13 assessments did not apply to raw tobacco derived directly from the land. Instead,
14 the assessments applied to the manufactured product. Thus the assessments were
15 not imposed on a product derived directly from the land, but on a manufactured
16 product twice or thrice removed from the land. The Court concluded that, to the
17 extent that the "exclusive use and benefit" language in Article II constitutes
18 express exemptive language prohibiting the imposition of taxes or fees on income
19 that a tribal member derives directly from the land, that language does not apply to
20 King Mountain's manufactured cigarettes or roll your own tobacco.

 Because King Mountain's manufactured tobacco products are not derived
 directly from the land under Ninth Circuit law, no amount of discovery regarding
 the Yakama people's understanding of the treaty can change the result in this case.

1 Thus, discovery on King Mountain's counterclaim and defense regarding Article II
2 of the Treaty is irrelevant and unnecessary.

3 King Mountain also argues that Article III precludes imposition of the
4 FETRA assessments. Article III states:

5 [I]f necessary for the public convenience, roads may be run
6 throughout the said reservation; and on the other hand, the right of
7 way, with free access from the same to the nearest public highway, is
secured to them; as also the right in common with citizens of the
United States, to travel upon all public highways.

8 Treaty with the Yakamas, art. III, 12 Stat. 951. King Mountain contends that this
9 article guaranteed to the Yakama tribe the right to "take their goods to market free
10 of any fees, tolls, or other impediments." ECF No. 10 at 4. King Mountain made
11 this argument in the previous excise tax cases. *King Mountain I*, 923 F.Supp.2d at
12 1285-87; *King Mountain II*, 996 F.Supp.2d at 1068-70.

13 In those prior cases, this Court determined that the "free access" language in
14 Article III "is not express exemptive language applicable to King Mountain's
15 manufactured tobacco products." *King Mountain*, 996 F.Supp.2d at 1069. The
16 Court relied on *Ramsey*, 302 F.3d at 1076-77, and concluded that "Article III
17 provides 'free access' on roads running throughout the reservation to the public
18 highways. King Mountain is not being taxed for using on-reservation roads," but
19 rather "for manufacturing tobacco products." *Id.* at 1068-69. Thus, although the
20 "free access" language may constitute express exemptive language, *see Ramsey*,

1 302 F.3d at 1080 (“The only exemptive language in the Treaty is the ‘free access’
2 language.”), that language was not applicable to the excise taxes imposed on King
3 Mountain’s manufactured tobacco products.

4 The same principle applies to this case. The FETRA assessments are
5 imposed against King Mountain as a manufacturer of cigarettes and roll your own
6 tobacco, not as a driver on the roads. Therefore, Article III’s “free access”
7 language does not apply to the facts of this case. There is no ambiguity that must
8 be resolved in King Mountain’s favor.

9 King Mountain argues that Article III’s language guaranteeing to the
10 Yakama “the right in common with citizens of the United States, to travel upon all
11 public highways” is infringed by the imposition of FETRA assessments. King
12 Mountain relies on *Smiskin* to argue that the right to travel encompasses the right
13 to trade, that a fee on King Mountain’s manufactured product violates King
14 Mountain’s right to trade, and thus that the fee also violates King Mountain’s right
15 to travel under Article III of the Treaty. The United States contends that *Smiskin* is
16 distinguishable and that *McKenna*’s holding that the Yakama Treaty does not
17 guarantee a “right to trade” is controlling.

18 In *Smiskin*, the Ninth Circuit reviewed a state law requiring individuals
19 intending to transport unstamped cigarettes to give notice to the Washington State
20 Liquor Control Board in advance of the transportation. *Smiskin*, 487 F.3d at 1263.

1 The law did not expressly exempt Yakama tribal members from the pre-
2 notification requirement, and the Smiskins were federally indicted for failing to
3 provide notice. *Id.* The court considered whether applying the law to Yakama
4 tribal members violated the right to travel under the Yakama Treaty. *Id.* at 1264-
5 70.

6 The *Smiskin* court summarized its prior holding in *Cree II* in which the
7 Ninth Circuit found that Article III of the Yakama Treaty guaranteed to Yakama
8 members “the right to transport goods to market over public highways without
9 payment of fees for that use.” *Id.* at 1265 (quoting *Cree II*, 157 F.3d at 769)
10 (internal quotation marks omitted). The *Smiskin* court also spoke of the “the treaty
11 right to transport goods to market without restriction,” ensured by Article III of the
12 Treaty. *Id.* at 1266. The court rejected the Government’s argument that Article
13 III’s right to travel should not apply to commercial exchanges:

14 Similarly, we refuse to draw what would amount to an arbitrary line
15 between travel and trade in this context, holding, as the Government
16 suggests, that the Yakama Treaty does not protect the ‘commerce’ at
17 issue in the Smiskins’ case. We have already established that the
18 Right to Travel provision ‘guarantee[s] the Yakamas the right to
19 transport goods to *market*’ for ‘*trade* and other purposes.’ Thus,
20 whether the goods at issue are timber or tobacco products, the right to
travel overlaps with the right to trade under the Yakama Treaty such
that excluding commercial exchanges from its purview would
effectively abrogate our decision in *Cree II* and render the Right to
Travel provision truly impotent.

1 *Id.* at 1266 (quoting *Cree II*, 157 F.3d at 769). The *Smiskin* court concluded that
2 the pre-notification requirement operated as a “restriction” and “condition” on the
3 right to travel and thus violated Article III of the Yakama Treaty. *Id.*

4 In *McKenna*, the Ninth Circuit analyzed a state escrow statute requiring
5 King Mountain to place money into an escrow account to reimburse the State for
6 health care costs related to the use of tobacco products. *McKenna*, 768 F.3d at
7 990. The amount of money to be placed in escrow was based on “the number of
8 cigarette sales made that are subject to state cigarette taxes.” *Id.* at 990-91. The
9 court considered whether applying the statute to King Mountain violated Article
10 III’s guarantee of the Right to Travel. *Id.* at 997-98.

11 King Mountain argued in *McKenna* that the Ninth Circuit’s “controlling case
12 law has interpreted Article III as unequivocally prohibiting imposition of economic
13 restrictions or pre-conditions on the Yakama people’s Treaty right to engage in the
14 trade of tobacco products.” *Id.* at 997. The *McKenna* court explicitly rejected that
15 claim, stating that “[a]s shown by the plain text of Article III, the Treaty reserved
16 to the Yakama the right ‘to travel upon all public highways.’ Nowhere in Article
17 III is the right to trade discussed.” *Id.* The court distinguished *Cree II*, noting that
18 it “involved the right to travel (driving trucks on public roads) for the purpose of
19 transporting goods to market.” *Id.* at 998. The court concluded that applying the
20

1 state's escrow statute to King Mountain did not violate Article III of the Yakama
2 Treaty because "there is no right to trade in the Yakama Treaty." *Id.*

3 The FETRA assessments in this case are more analogous to the required
4 payment into an escrow account, as in *McKenna*, than to the notification
5 requirement held to violate Article III in *Smiskin*. In *McKenna*, King Mountain
6 was required to pay into Washington's escrow fund because of its status as a
7 tobacco manufacturer that elected not to participate in the Master Settlement
8 Agreement. *McKenna*, 768 F.3d at 991. The amount that King Mountain was
9 required to pay into the fund was determined based on "each qualifying unit of
10 tobacco sold" by King Mountain. *Id.* at 992. Similarly, the FETRA assessments
11 apply to King Mountain because of King Mountain's status as a manufacturer of
12 tobacco products. The assessments are imposed on King Mountain in direct
13 proportion to King Mountain's share of the market.

14 Like the escrow payments in *McKenna*, the FETRA assessments do not
15 constitute a "restriction" or "condition" on the use of the public highways. At
16 most, the FETRA assessments have an indirect impact on King Mountain's trade
17 and sale of tobacco, but that impact is too attenuated from King Mountain's use of
18 the public highways to be in any way related to the right to travel guaranteed by
19 Article III. The attenuated nature of the FETRA assessments contrasts distinctly
20 with the pre-notification requirement in *Smiskin*, which was only triggered if the

1 tribal member wished to transport unstamped tobacco products within the state.
2 *Smiskin*, 487 F.3d at 1263. The FETRA assessments are imposed based on King
3 Mountain's market share, and as the Court noted in *McKenna*, the Yakama Treaty
4 does not guarantee the right to trade unencumbered. *McKenna*, 768 F.3d at 998.

5 Additionally, King Mountain's argument that Article III's "in common
6 with" language guaranteeing the Yakama people the right to travel prohibits the
7 imposition of FETRA assessments is refuted by *Ramsey*. The Ninth Circuit in
8 *Ramsey* considered Article III's provision providing "the right in common with
9 citizens of the United States, to travel upon all public highways," and held that the
10 "in common with" language "contains no exemptive language." *Ramsey*, 302 F.3d
11 at 1080. Neither *Smiskin* nor *McKenna* contain a similar holding because both
12 cases concerned state laws, and the court applied the state standard which does not
13 require that the treaty first contain express exemptive language. The Ninth Circuit
14 has held already that the "in common with" language does not constitute express
15 exemptive language, and this Court is bound by that decision.

16 Neither Article II nor Article III of the Yakama Treaty contains express
17 exemptive language under the federal standard of review. Without express
18 exemptive language, the Court may not consider extrinsic evidence regarding how
19 Yakama tribe members understood the Treaty at the time that it was ratified.
20

1 Therefore, no discovery on King Mountain's Yakama Treaty counterclaim and
2 defense is warranted. King Mountain's motions for discovery are denied.

3 **D. Motion to Dismiss**

4 The United States moves to dismiss King Mountain's counterclaim
5 contending that the 1855 Yakama Treaty exempts it from paying FETRA
6 assessments. ECF No. 14. The United States argues that King Mountain has failed
7 to state a claim upon which relief may be granted because it did not present a
8 cognizable legal theory. ECF No. 14.

9 The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure allow for the dismissal of a complaint
10 where the plaintiff fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Fed. R.
11 Civ. P. 12(b)(6). A motion to dismiss brought pursuant to this rule "tests the legal
12 sufficiency of a claim." *Navarro v. Block*, 250 F.3d 729, 732 (9th Cir. 2001). In
13 reviewing the sufficiency of a complaint, a court accepts all well-pleaded
14 allegations as true and construes those allegations in the light most favorable to the
15 non-moving party. *Daniels-Hall v. Nat'l Educ. Ass'n*, 629 F.3d 992, 998 (9th Cir.
16 2010) (citing *Manzarek v. St. Paul Fire & Marine Ins. Co.*, 519 F.3d 1025, 1031-
17 32 (9th Cir. 2008)).

18 To withstand dismissal, a complaint must contain "enough facts to state a
19 claim to relief that is plausible on its face." *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S.
20 544, 570 (2007). "A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual

1 content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is
2 liable for the misconduct alleged.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009).

3 The question “is ‘not whether [the Plaintiff] will ultimately prevail’ on his claim,
4 but whether his complaint was sufficient to cross the federal court's threshold.”
5 *Skinner v. Switzer*, 562 U.S. 521 (2011) (quoting *Scheuer v. Rhodes*, 416 U.S. 232,
6 236 (1974)).

7 Under *Ramsey*, a statute or treaty must contain express exemptive language
8 in order to exempt a Native American organization from paying a tax or fee.
9 *Ramsey*, 302 F.3d at 1079. Article II and Article III of the Yakama Treaty do not
10 contain express exemptive language applicable to this case. Consistent with the
11 Ninth Circuit’s holding in *Hoptowit*, the “exclusive use and benefit” language in
12 Article II does not preclude imposition of FETRA assessments on King
13 Mountain’s manufactured cigarettes or roll your own tobacco because the
14 manufactured product is not derived directly from the land. Similarly, consistent
15 with the Ninth Circuit’s holding in *Ramsey*, neither the “free access” nor the “in
16 common with” language in Article III precludes imposition of the FETRA
17 assessments because the assessments are levied against King Mountain’s
18 manufactured product, not against King Mountain’s use of the roads.

19 Neither article exempts King Mountain from paying its FETRA assessments.
20 There is no set of facts which King Mountain could plead that would change this

1 result, and thus King Mountain has failed to plead a cognizable legal theory with
2 regard to its treaty counterclaim. The United States' motion to dismiss King
3 Mountain's treaty counterclaim is granted.

4 **E. Motion for Summary Judgment**

5 The United States moves for summary judgment in its favor against King
6 Mountain on its claim to recover unpaid FETRA assessments. ECF No. 15. If this
7 case survives King Mountain's motion for summary judgment on its counterclaim
8 that the FETRA assessments violate the Takings Clause, the Court will remand this
9 case to CCC for a hearing and determination regarding the accuracy of the
10 assessment calculations. Accordingly, the Court denies with leave to renew the
11 United States' motion for summary judgment.

12 **F. Motion to Strike Jury Demand**

13 The United States moves to strike King Mountain's jury demand. ECF No.
14 22. The Supreme Court has held that "the Seventh Amendment right to trial by
15 jury does not apply in actions against the Federal Government." *Lehman v.*
16 *Nakshian*, 453 U.S. 156, 160 (1981). However, the "Seventh Amendment
17 guarantees a jury trial to determine liability in a Government action seeking civil
18 penalties." *United States v. Nordbrock*, 941 F.2d 947, 949 (9th Cir. 1991) (citing
19 *Tull v. United States*, 481 U.S. 412, 418-25 (1987)). The United States is not
20 seeking penalties in this case, only assessments and accrued interest. Therefore the

1 Seventh Amendment does not provide a basis to grant King Mountain's request for
2 a jury trial.

3 Section 714b(c) of Title 15 of the United States Code states that "[a]ll suits
4 against the [CCC] shall be tried by the court without a jury." 15 U.S.C. § 714b(c).
5 Additionally, "[a]ny suit by or against the United States as the real party in interest
6 based upon any claim by or against the [CCC]" is subject to § 714b(c). Therefore,
7 there is no statutory right to a jury trial in this case either.

8 There being no constitutional or statutory basis for a jury trial, the United
9 States' motion to strike the jury demand is granted.

10 Accordingly, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:**

11 1. The United States' Motion for Summary Judgment, **ECF No. 15**, is

12 **DENIED with leave to renew.**

13 2. The United States' Motion to Dismiss Counterclaim, **ECF No. 14**, is

14 **GRANTED in part.** King Mountain's **counterclaim** that the 1855

15 Yakama Treaty precludes imposition of FETRA assessments against it is

16 **DISMISSED with PREJUDICE.** King Mountain's counterclaim that

17 the General Allotment Act precludes imposition of FETRA assessments

18 against it is deemed **WAIVED.**

1 3. The United States' Motion to Strike Jury Demand, **ECF No. 22**, is
2 **GRANTED**. King Mountain's **jury demand** is hereby **STRICKEN**
3 from the record.

4 4. King Mountain's Rule 56(d) Motion in Opposition to United States of
5 America's Motion for Summary Judgment, **ECF No. 23**, is **DENIED**.

6 5. King Mountain's Motion in Support of Defendant's Essential Right to
7 Conduct Discovery, **ECF No. 25**, is **DENIED**.

8 6. The United States' Motion to Strike Reply Memorandum, **ECF No. 37**, is
9 **DENIED**.

10 The District Court Clerk is directed to enter this Order and provide copies to
11 counsel.

12 **DATED** this 27th day of July 2015.

13
14 *s/ Rosanna Malouf Peterson*
15 ROSANNA MALOUF PETERSON
16 Chief United States District Court Judge
17
18
19
20