

VW And Porsche Largely Invalidate Headlight Patent At PTAB

By Adam Lidgett

Law360 (May 23, 2024, 8:49 PM EDT) -- The Patent Trial and Appeal Board has invalidated the vast majority of an Israeli inventor's patent covering adaptive headlights challenged by Volkswagen and Porsche, finding all but three challenged claims were obvious.

In a Wednesday decision from the PTAB, a three-judge administrative panel threw out 30 claims in Yechezkal Evan Spero's patent but left three intact.

The 30 claims were found to be invalid as obvious in light of a prior U.S. patent called Gotou and a World Intellectual Property Organization patent publication called Karlsson, the PTAB panel said.

The patent — U.S. Patent No. 11,208,029 — covers a system that allows control of LED car headlamps, according to the PTAB.

Gotou also covered a "head lamp device for [a] vehicle," and Karlsson covered "a lighting device having a controllable lighting pattern," according to board records.

"We find that skilled artisans would have had reason to combine Karlsson's teachings with Gotou's as petitioner asserts because of known benefits from LEDs in headlamps," the PTAB said.

The patent has been at issue in a few federal suits, two of which were filed by Torchlight Technologies LLC, the only licensee of the patent, according to the board.

The firm representing Volkswagen declined to comment to Law360 on Thursday.

Counsel for the other parties did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Thursday.

The patent-at-issue is U.S. Patent No. 11,208,029 B2.

Administrative Patent Judges Jon Jurgovan, Jason Melvin and Aaron W. Moore sat on the panel.

Volkswagen is represented by Michael D. Specht, Jason A. Fitzsimmons, Daniel E. Yonan and Ian Soule of Sterne Kessler Goldstein & Fox PLLC.

Porsche is represented by Edgar H. Haug and Robert E. Colletti of Haug Partners LLP.

The patent owner is represented by Sangeeta Shah, David Bir and Andrew B. Turner of Brooks Kushman PC.

The case is Volkswagen Group of America Inc. et al. v. Yechezkal Evan Spero, case number IPR2022-01586, before the Patent Trial and Appeal Board.

--Editing by Dave Trumbore.

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