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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
AT TACOMA

RANDALL D. and BARBARA HOLT,  
  
Plaintiffs,  
  
v.  
  
BOART LONGYEAR COMPANY,  
  
Defendant.

CASE NO. C13-5655 BHS  
  
ORDER DENYING PLAINTIFFS'  
MOTION TO REMAND

This matter comes before the Court on Plaintiffs Randall and Barbara Holt's ("Holts") motion to remand (Dkt. 6). The Court has considered the pleadings filed in support of and in opposition to the motion and the remainder of the file and hereby denies the motion for the reasons stated herein.

**I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

On July 26, 2013, the Holts filed a complaint against Defendant Boart Longyear Company ("Boart") in Pierce County Superior Court for the State of Washington. Dkt. 10, Declaration of Paul R. Taylor, Exh. 1 ("Comp."). The Holts assert causes of action

1 for (1) termination of the parties' lease, and (2) injunctive relief of removal of the  
2 assigned occupier of the Holts' property. *Id.*

3 On August 2, 2013, Boart removed the matter to this Court. Dkt. 1.

4 On August 15, 2013, the Holts filed a motion for remand. Dkt. 6. On September  
5 3, 2013, Boart responded. Dkt. 9. On September 6, 2013, the Holts replied. Dkt. 12.

## 6 II. DISCUSSION

7 The Holts argue that the Court should remand the matter because the amount in  
8 controversy does not exceed the jurisdictional minimum or, in the alternative, the Court  
9 should abstain from this local landlord-tenant matter.

### 10 A. Amount in Controversy

11 Diversity jurisdiction requires that at least \$75,000 is in controversy. 28 U.S.C. §  
12 1332. When the complaint is unclear and the action has been removed from state court,  
13 defendant "bears the burden of establishing, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the  
14 amount in controversy exceeds [the jurisdictional minimum]." *Sanchez v. Monumental*  
15 *Life Ins. Co.*, 102 F.3d 398, 404 (9th Cir. 1996). "Under this burden, the defendant must  
16 provide evidence establishing that it is 'more likely than not' that the amount in  
17 controversy exceeds that amount." *Id.*

18 In this case, Boart has met its burden. It is undisputed that approximately  
19 \$200,000 in rent, at \$19,000 per month, remains to be paid under the lease. The Holts  
20 request that Boart be held liable for either this amount or monthly rent until the premise is  
21 relet. Comp. ¶ 5.1.3. The Holts argue that Boart has failed to show that it would take  
22 four months or longer to relet the property and, therefore, the amount in controversy is

1 less than the jurisdictional minimum. The fact that the case was even filed, however, is  
2 evidence that it is more likely than not that the property will not be relet within four  
3 months. The current controversy regarding assignment of the lease began in February  
4 2013, which is more than four months, and has not been resolved. Moreover, the level of  
5 detailed information that the Holts have requested of the proposed assignee show that any  
6 subsequent leasing of the property will most likely be a complicated business transaction  
7 that could take many months to finalize. Therefore, the Court denies the Holts' motion  
8 on this issue.

9 **B. Abstention**

10 The Holts' arguments in favor of abstention are based on unlawful detainer actions  
11 where the rightful possessor of the property has already been determined. *See* Dkt. 6 at  
12 10–12. These authorities are completely inapplicable to the current controversy in which  
13 possession pursuant to a lease is disputed. Therefore, the Court denies the Holts' motion  
14 on this issue.

15 **III. ORDER**

16 Therefore, it is hereby **ORDERED** that the Holts' motion to remand (Dkt. 6) is  
17 **DENIED.**

18 Dated this 12th day of September, 2013.

19 

20  
21 **BENJAMIN H. SETTLE**  
22 United States District Judge