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Jury Hands Kawasaki \$48M In Semiconductor Patent Trial

By Elliot Weld and Adam Lidgett

Law360 (March 16, 2026, 12:30 PM EDT) -- A California federal jury has said a Japanese technology company owes about \$48 million for infringing a Kawasaki semiconductor patent and found that the infringement was willful.

Jurors found in favor of Kawasaki Jukogyo Kabushiki Kaisa, also known as Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd., in a Friday verdict. The verdict said Rorze Corp. and its U.S. subsidiary Rorze Automation Inc. owed about \$16.7 million in lost profits and another \$31.7 million in royalties damages. The willfulness finding will allow the court to consider boosting the damages.

Rorze had argued that the patent claims were invalid as obvious in light of an earlier Japanese patent referred to as Kazunari, as well as a semiconductor equipment and materials industry standard referred to as SEMI E6, according to court documents. Rorze also claimed that the patent was invalid due to written description, but that argument was rejected by the jury.

The case, filed in August 2022, initially included five reissue patents, all covering a "wafer transfer apparatus and substrate transfer apparatus," but only U.S. Patent Number US RE45,772 went to trial, court records showed.

Thin crystalline silicon wafers are used to make semiconductor chips, and the patents specifically cover the robots that transport the wafers inside processing stations used in the chipmaking process, according to court documents.

The operative complaint in the case targeted Rorze wafer transfer products including equipment front end modules, or EFEMs.

Rorze shot back by launching counterclaims, including for antitrust violations and unfair competition, but U.S. District Judge P. Casey Pitts in June 2024 dismissed the counterclaims.

Counsel for the parties did not immediately respond to requests for comment from Law360.

The patent-in-suit is U.S. Patent Number US RE45,772.

Kawasaki is represented by Thomas F. Koegel, Molly A. Jones, Robert S. Mallin, Tadashi Horie, Mark H. Remus and Ryan T. Fitzgerald of Crowell & Moring LLP.

Rorze is represented by Sandra K. Wootton, John P. Passarelli, Jonathan I. Baker, Scott J. Strohm, Jason S. Jackson and Aaron A. Myers of Kutak Rock LLP and Masao Yoshimura of Chen Yoshimura LLP.

The case is *Kawasaki Jukogyo Kabushiki Kaisha v. Rorze Corporation et al.*, case number 5:22-cv-04947, in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

--Editing by Alex Hubbard.

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