

## Marina operator blasts City of Miami for lease default

Melwani family attorney says officials abused power to oust them from Rickenbacker

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### Rickenbacker Marina

The operator of Rickenbacker Marina blasted the City of Miami for allegedly scheming to get rid of the boat storage company in advance of a large redevelopment of the marina.

An attorney for Aabad Melwani, whose family has run the Virginia Key facility for about 30 years, told the Daily Business Review city officials improperly manufactured a default of the marina's lease to keep Melwani's company from competing for a new agreement. Earlier this month, Melwani amended a pending [Miami-Dade Circuit Court lawsuit](#) against the city to account for the latest claim. The city wants a marina redevelopment with retail space, additional boat slips and a potential renovation of Marine Stadium.

City vendors are not allowed to bid on a new contract if they are in default on an existing lease.

“It’s a way of kicking my client out of the game,” attorney David Haber, who represents Melwani, told the Review. “Government officials should not abuse their authority, especially when they are using other people’s money.”

The city claims the marina operator violated the lease by failing to build an 11-foot-wide walkway and not contributing \$2 million toward the construction of a parking garage.— *Eric Kalis*