



SQL Server Failover Cluster Cannot Connect to NetApp File Share Witness via CNAME

https://kb.netapp.com/on-prem/ontap/da/NAS/NAS-KBs/SQL_Server_Failover_Cluster_Cannot_Conne...

Updated: Sun, 05 Apr 2026 12:34:18 GMT

Applies to

- NetApp ONTAP 9.13.1P6 (Cluster-Mode)
- Windows Server Failover Cluster (WSFC)
- SQL Server Failover Clustering with File Share Witness
- SMB/CIFS File Shares hosted on NetApp SVM
- DNS CNAME usage for SMB File Share Witness

Issue

When configuring a Windows Server Failover Cluster (WSFC) for SQL Server, attempts to use a DNS CNAME pointing to a NetApp SVM as the File Share Witness result in a failure. The cluster validation or configuration

wizard shows the error:

```
"It is not possible to determine whether the server is a cluster.  
Indicates two revision levels are incompatible."
```

Symptoms and Observations:

- Direct access to the SVM hostname (A record, e.g., \\svservername\witness) works for the File Share Witness.
- The same CNAME-based configuration works in other sites/domains .
- Windows Explorer can access shares via the CNAME from affected site, but SQL Server Failover Cluster cannot use it for File Share Witness.
- Packet traces and ONTAP logs show successful SMB/CIFS responses from NetApp; no protocol errors or version mismatches are seen on the storage side.

Relevant Log Output:

- SQL Cluster GUI:
"It is not possible to determine whether the server is a cluster. Indicates two revision levels are incompatible."
- DNS nslookup confirms CNAME resolves to the correct A record and IPs.