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Attorneys for Plaintiff Don M. Vasquez, individually and
on behalf of all others similarly situated

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF TULARE

DON M. VASQUEZ, individually and on
behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

SAPUTO CHEESE USA INC., a Delaware
corporation; and DOES 1 through 25,
inclusive

Defendants.

Case No. VCU282978

Consolidated with Case No. VCU283853

ASSIGNED FOR ALL PURPOSES TO:

The Honorable John P. Bianco

Department 2

CLASS ACTION

**DECLARATION OF DON M. VASQUEZ
IN SUPPORT OF UNOPPOSED
MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY
APPROVAL OF SETTLEMENT**

Hearing: December 4, 2023

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Dept: 2

Judge: Hon. John P. Bianco

Complaint filed: May 27, 2020

Trial date: Not set

1 I, Don M. Vasquez, declare:

2 1. I am over eighteen years of age. If called as a witness, I could testify to the facts
3 below based on personal knowledge.

4 2. I am not related to any attorney on the case, I am not aware of any interests I
5 have that are averse to the interests of any class member, and I do not have any conflicts that
6 would keep me from adequately representing the class. I have been and remain committed to
7 prosecuting this case vigorously on behalf of the class. I agreed to become a representative and
8 named plaintiff in this case to represent other employees who experienced similar violations.

9 3. I was employed by Saputo starting in 2006. I became a Line Coordinator in
10 2016 and worked in the Bardsley and Paige plants in Tulare until June of 2019.

11 4. After my employment ended, I retained the law firms of Cohelan Khoury &
12 Singer and Lebe Law, Inc. to pursue this case as a Class Action.

13 5. Since the case started, I have had many calls, and exchanged many emails with
14 my attorneys, and provided all documents and records they requested about my employment.
15 I also signed documents so my attorneys could request additional records from Saputo.

16 6. I spent many hours with my attorneys talking about the issues in the case,
17 especially as I was preparing for my deposition. I was deposed for a full day in April 2021.

18 7. By filing this lawsuit, I understood I was seeking compensation for other
19 employees, and doing so would delay any payment I might get for my individual claims, but I
20 agreed to do it to help others who might not have been aware of their rights, or were afraid to
21 come forward for fear of losing their jobs. I understood the lawsuit could continue for years,
22 and could require my attention the entire time.

23 8. It is difficult to estimate the exact amount of time I have spent on this lawsuit,
24 but it has continued for over three and half years. I do know that the time I spent representing
25 the class was time I was not able to spend with my family and friends or on other activities.

26 9. In addition to the time I would be required to spend on this case, I understood
27 that as a class representative, I was taking the risk of having a judgment entered for Saputo's
28 legal costs if the case were lost.

1 10. I understood by filing my lawsuit, prospective employers could search the
2 internet and see I sued a previous employer, and there was I could lose future job opportunities.

3 11. Despite the time and risks taken, I am proud to have my name on the case and to
4 have caused Saputo to pay my fellow employees a substantial amount they would not have
5 received otherwise.

6 12. To prepare for mediations in and May 2022 and March 2023, I discussed the
7 case in detail with my attorneys, including potential strengths and weaknesses. I believe my
8 thorough knowledge of Saputo's practices helped them to evaluate the claims and assess the
9 potential damages at the mediations and make informed decisions about settlement.

10 13. I made myself available the day of each mediation and spoke with my attorneys
11 on those days. I believe my efforts helped obtain the results in this case.

12 14. I reviewed and signed the "Stipulation of Class Action and PAGA Settlement."
13 Based on my involvement and the issues and risks involved in this case, I believe the proposed
14 settlement obtained on behalf of the Class is a good result.

15 15. I understand I am eligible for an award for acting as a class representative, and
16 that this is subject to Court approval. Considering the time I spent over the last three and a half
17 years, the risks I took, and the money other employees will receive as part of this settlement,
18 I believe the requested award of \$10,000 is reasonable.

19 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the
20 foregoing is true and correct. Executed on November 6, 2023 in Tulare, California

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23 Don M. Vasquez
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