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FILED
Superior Court of California
County of Los Angeles

06/13/2023

David W. Slayton, Executive Officer / Clerk of Court

By: L. M'Greené Deputy

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

MARIO ROMERO, as an individual and on behalf
of all others similarly situated, and as a private
attorney general,

Plaintiff,

vs.

SAN FRANCISCO C&C/MEL'S DRIVE IN,
form unknown; and DOES 1 through 50, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. 20STCV41738

[Hon. Carolyn B. Kuhl, Department 12]

**[PROPOSED] ORDER GRANTING
MOTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF
CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND
FINAL JUDGMENT**

Date: June 14, 2023
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Department: 12

Complaint Filed: October 27, 2020

1 On or about May 19, 2023, Plaintiff, Mario Romero, filed a motion for an Order Granting Final
2 Approval of Class Action Settlement, and on June 14, 2023, a hearing was held on this matter.

3 The Court has considered the papers and evidence, including the Joint Stipulation of Class
4 Action Settlement and Amendment to the Joint Stipulation of Class Action Settlement (collectively, the
5 “Agreement”), the arguments of counsel, and all other matters presented to the Court regarding final
6 approval of the settlement, approval of requested allocations from the settlement fund, and entry of final
7 judgment.

8 **I. Background**

9 On October 27, 2020, Plaintiff, Mario Romero, initiated this class and Labor Code Private
10 Attorneys General Act of 2004 (“PAGA”) action against Defendant, San Francisco C & C dba Mel’s
11 Drive-In. On behalf of a putative class of current and former non-exempt employees of Defendant in the
12 State of California and as a proxy for the State, the lawsuit pursues class action and PAGA claims for
13 Defendant’s alleged failures to pay or timely pay all sick pay wages and overtime, provide meal and rest
14 breaks, and furnish accurate itemized wage statements. Defendant denies the allegations.

15 **A. Class Members**

16 The Class is defined to include all current and former non-exempt employees of Defendant, San
17 Francisco C & C dba Mel’s Drive-In, in the State of California from October 20, 2016, through May 31,
18 2022 (the “Class Period”). PAGA Employees include Class Members who were employed from October
19 14, 2019, through May 31, 2022 (the “PAGA Period”).

20 **B. Operation of the Settlement**

21 Pursuant to the Court’s March 24, 2023 Preliminary Approval Order, the Court conditionally
22 certified the Class and granted preliminary approval to the settlement. The Preliminary Approval Order
23 also approved of the proposed forms of notice to the Class. The Court entered the Preliminary Approval
24 Order after review and consideration of all of the pleadings filed in connection herewith, and the oral
25 presentations made by counsel at the hearing. In compliance with the Preliminary Approval Order, the
26 Notice of Class Action Settlement (“Class Notice”) was sent to all Class Members via first class mail.
27 The notice process was timely completed.

1 This Court finds that the Agreement appears to be the product of serious, informed, non-
2 collusive negotiations, has no obvious deficiencies, and does not improperly grant preferential treatment
3 to any individuals. The Court finds that the Settlement was entered into in good faith pursuant to
4 California Code of Civil Procedure section 877.6. The Court further finds that the Agreement is fair,
5 adequate, and reasonable and that Plaintiff has satisfied the standards for final approval of a class action
6 settlement under California law. Under the provisions of California Code of Civil Procedure section 382
7 and Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, as approved for use in *Vasquez v. Superior Court*, 4
8 Cal. 3d 800, 821 (1971), the trial court has discretion to certify a class where:

9 [Q]uestions of law or fact common to the members of the class predominate over any questions
10 affecting only individual members, and that a class action is superior to the available methods for
the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy

11 FED. R. CIV. PROC. 23.

12 Certification of a settlement class is the appropriate judicial device under these circumstances.

13 Good cause appearing **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND ADJUDICATED** as follows:

14 1. For purposes of this Order, the Court adopts all defined terms as set forth in the
15 Agreement.

16 2. The Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of the litigation, the Class
17 Representative, Settlement Class Members, and Defendant.

18 3. The Court finds that the dissemination of the Class Notice to the Class Members by the
19 appointed Settlement Administrator, Phoenix Settlement Administrators, constituted the best notice
20 practicable under the circumstances to all Class Members, and fully met the requirements of California
21 law and due process under the State and Federal Constitutions.

22 4. The Court approves the settlement of the above-captioned action, as set forth in the
23 Agreement, as fair, adequate, and reasonable to the Parties and Class Members. The Parties are directed
24 to perform in accordance with the terms set forth in the Agreement.

25 5. Except as otherwise provided in the Agreement, the Parties are to bear their own costs
26 and attorneys' fees.

1 6. The Court hereby certifies the following Class of all current and former non-exempt
2 employees of Defendant, San Francisco C & C dba Mel's Drive-In, in the State of California from
3 October 20, 2016, through May 31, 2022.

4 7. With respect to the Class and for purposes of approving the settlement only and for no
5 other purpose, this Court finds and concludes that: (a) the members of the Class are ascertainable and so
6 numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable; (b) there are questions of law or fact common to
7 the Class, and there is a well-defined community of interest among members of the Class with respect to
8 the subject matter of the non-exempt claims in the Action; (c) the claims of Class Representative are
9 typical of the claims of the members of the Class; (d) the Class Representative has fairly and adequately
10 protected the interests of the members of the Class; (e) a class action is superior to other available
11 methods for an efficient adjudication of this controversy; and (f) the counsel of record for the Class
12 Representative, i.e., Class Counsel, are qualified to serve as counsel for Plaintiff in his individual and
13 representative capacities and for the Class.

14 8. Within seven days after the grant of Final Approval of the settlement, Defendant shall
15 deposit the Gross Settlement Amount of \$750,000.00 with the Administrator, pursuant to the terms of
16 the Agreement.

17 9. From the Gross Settlement Amount, the Administrator shall pay:

- 18 • to Class Counsel attorneys' fees in the amount of \$250,000.00 and reimbursement of
- 19 costs in the amount of \$12,775.37;
- 20 • to Class Representative Mario Romero for his unique services to the Class, and as
- 21 consideration for the execution of a general release, the amount of \$10,000.00;
- 22 • to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency the amount of
- 23 \$37,500.00 for its 75% share of PAGA Penalties; and
- 24 • to Phoenix Settlement Administrators the amount of \$15,000.00 for its fees and costs
- 25 in administering the settlement.

26 10. The Court finds that these amounts are fair and reasonable. The Administrator is directed
27 to make such payments in accordance with the terms of the Agreement. The attorneys' fees are reasonable in
28 light of the benefit obtained for the class.

11. The Court approves the Individual Settlement Payment and Individual PAGA Payment amounts, which shall be distributed by the Administrator pursuant to the terms of the Agreement, after allocation of the amounts set forth in Paragraph 9.

12. The Court hereby orders the parties to implement the terms of the Agreement, including distributing the funds from any uncashed settlement checks to the State Unclaimed Property Fund in the name of the recipient.

13. All Class Members who did not opt out of the Settlement shall be bound by the releases provided in the Agreement. All PAGA Employees shall be bound by the PAGA releases provided in the Agreement. The Class Representative shall be bound by the additional general releases provided in the Agreement.

14. The Court hereby enters final judgment in this case in accordance with the terms of the Settlement, Preliminary Approval Order, and this Order. Without affecting the finality of the Settlement or Judgment entered, this Court shall retain exclusive and continuing jurisdiction over the action and the Parties, including all Settlement Class Members, for purposes of enforcing and interpreting this Order and the Settlement. A final report of the Administrator shall be filed by 2/6/2024.

A non-appearance case review re the filing of the final report is set for 2/9/2024.
15. Pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 668.5, judgment shall be entered as of the filing of this judgment. This judgment makes no finding of any violation of the Labor Code, liability, or other wrongdoing. None of the settlement or any of its terms, the order approving the settlement, or this judgment are an admission of any liability or finding of any violation of the Labor Code.

IT IS SO ORDERED AND ADJUDGED.

DATED: 06/13/2023, 2023



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn B. Kuhl".

THE HONORABLE CAROLYN B. KUHL
Carolyn B. Kuhl / Judge