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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

MARIA ZAMBRANO and ALFONSO PEREZ
URIBE, individually, on behalf of themselves
and on behalf of all persons similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

TUDOR RANCH, INC., a California
Corporation; and Does 1 through 50, Inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. CVRI2102436

**DECLARATION OF MARIA
ZAMBRANO IN SUPPORT OF
MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY
APPROVAL OF SETTLEMENT**

Hearing Date: January 30, 2024

Hearing Time: 8:30 a.m.

Judge: Hon. Harold W. Hopp
Dept. 1

Action Filed: May 27, 2021

Trial Date: Not set

1 I, Maria Zambrano, declare as follows:

2 1. I am over the age of eighteen, a Plaintiff and a proposed Class Representative in the
3 above-entitled matter. I submit this declaration in support of the Motion for Preliminary
4 Approval of Settlement and in support of my application for a Class Representative Service
5 Payment.
6

7 2. I have personal knowledge of all the facts stated herein. I could and would competently
8 testify under oath to these facts in court if requested to do so.

9 3. I worked in California for Tudor Ranch, Inc. ("Tudor Ranch") from September of 2019 to
10 November of 2020. I was classified by Tudor Ranch as a non-exempt employee during that time
11 period.
12

13 4. I retained my attorneys who are experienced in both class action and PAGA
14 representative action litigation and claims against employers for violations of the California
15 Labor Code. I have no personal relationship or family ties to my attorneys or any officer of the
16 Court. I am not aware of having any actual or potential conflicts of interest with another class
17 member in this case nor am I aware of having any actual or potential conflicts of interest with
18 ILYM Group, Inc., the settlement administrator. I am not aware of any other pending matter or
19 action asserting claims that will be extinguished or adversely affected by this settlement.
20

21 5. I decided to pursue this class action lawsuit and be a plaintiff/class representative
22 because I felt that my legal rights as an employee and others like me were violated. For example,
23 I was often not provided with compliant meal and rest breaks and wasn't paid all the meal and
24 rest break premium payments I was entitled to when these violations occurred. I was also
25 required to work off the clock at times, during my meal and rest breaks for example, but I was
26 not paid any wages for this time I worked for the company. My pay statements were also
27

1 inaccurate for various reasons including not correctly stating the total amount of hours I worked.

2 6. I spoke to my attorneys several times and discussed how Tudor Ranch implemented
3 its company policies and procedures. I also assisted my attorneys in their investigation into my
4 claims by providing them documents and answering their questions. I reviewed the complaint
5 before it was filed and after it was filed I was given access to an electronic file sharing program
6 that alerted me via email when important documents were filed so that I could review them and
7 keep up with the developments in the case which I understood was one of my duties as a class
8 representative. I would also contact my attorneys from time to time if I had any questions about
9 the case.
10

11 7. Even though this action is in the process of settling, I was and remain prepared to
12 perform all the duties of a class representative. I understand that as a class representative I have
13 assumed a fiduciary responsibility to prosecute this class action on behalf of the absent class
14 members. I have understood that as a fiduciary, I have a duty to prosecute this action for the
15 benefit of the class members and surrender any right to compromise the group action for an
16 individual gain.
17

18 8. I understood that being a plaintiff/class representative in this case meant that I
19 was seeking damages not only for myself but also other current and/or former non-exempt
20 employees working for Tudor Ranch in California. I felt that these individuals were not aware of
21 their labor law rights and even if they were they would probably be apprehensive about speaking
22 up or even simply because of the time, effort and risk involved in filing a class action lawsuit.
23

24 9. I understood that being a part of this lawsuit involved risks. For example, my
25 attorneys explained to me that if the case went to trial and we lost, I could be held responsible to
26 pay for all or part of the attorney fees and costs paid by Tudor Ranch to defend this lawsuit.
27

1 Also, I knew there was a risk that future employers, if they ever find out about this lawsuit, could
2 hold it against me or downgrade me as a potential hire. As one of only two named Plaintiffs in
3 this case it would not be difficult for a future employer to become aware that I sued my employer
4 for labor law violations. Ultimately I decided these risks were worth it and decided to fight for
5 my rights and the rights of others regardless of the risks, time and effort I spent on this case.
6

7 10. During the lawsuit I stayed in touch with my attorneys by phone and email. I also
8 kept up to date on important developments by reviewing court filings that were made available to
9 me electronically as I described above.

10 11. A mediation took place on February 15, 2023 with Tripper Ortman, a well-
11 respected and experienced mediator of wage and hour class actions. After the mediation the
12 parties were able to reach an agreement to settle the action based on a mediator's proposal. I
13 communicated with my attorneys regarding the terms of the settlement which was reached
14 between the parties and understood that I was representing absent class members and therefore
15 wanted the best possible result to be obtained for the class members and I believe a very positive
16 result was in fact achieved via settlement. I reviewed and signed the Memorandum of
17 Understanding on June 26, 2023 and when the final settlement papers were ready, I closely
18 reviewed the Settlement Agreement which I signed on November 8, 2023.
19

20 12. I have been actively involved with this lawsuit performing the duties described above.
21 Although I did not keep time records, I was in regular contact with my attorneys, reviewed court
22 filings, and spent a significant amount of time on the issues presented during the lawsuit and in
23 the settlement process. I estimate that I spent approximately 40 hours working on this case up
24 until this point. I believe I have been diligent and have done what is expected of a named
25 plaintiff and a proposed class representative to date, and will continue to do so. I have and
26
27

1 always will maintain the best interest of the class members.

2 13. My attorneys explained to me that the settlement process involves a two-step
3 review by the Court to determine whether the settlement is fair before approving the settlement.
4 I know this process also involves notifying all class members of the settlement terms and of their
5 rights to make a claim for their settlement share, to opt out of the settlement or to object to the
6 settlement.
7

8 14. I believe I did the right thing by filing this case on behalf of the class members who,
9 subject to court approval, are in line to receive monetary payments as a result of this case and
10 settlement. This is money they may never have ever gotten if I did not pursue this action on their
11 behalf. I feel significant personal satisfaction to know that I played a role in the class members
12 being entitled to monetary payments as a result of the filing of this lawsuit. I also believe that
13 the requested Class Representative Service Payment of \$10,000 from the settlement is fair
14 compensation for the work I performed and the risks I undertook.
15

16 15. As part of the settlement it was necessary for me to sign a general release of all
17 claims I may have against Tudor Ranch. I believe the Class Representative Service Payment I
18 have requested provides me with some compensation for this agreed release.
19

20 16. In light of all the time and effort I have spent on this case, the risk I undertook by
21 suing a former employer, the exposure to being responsible for paying Tudor Ranch's costs in
22 the event we did not win the case, the reputational risk that future employers may hold this
23 lawsuit against me, the general release, and in light of the size of the settlement, I believe the
24 request for \$10,000 as a Class Representative service payment is fair and reasonable.

25 ///

26 ///

1 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the
2 foregoing is true and correct.

3 Executed on Jan 2, 2024, at Thermall, California
4 (city, state)

5 
6 Maria Zambrano (Jan 2, 2024 06:40 PST)
7 Maria Zambrano