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County of Los Angeles
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David W. Slayton,
Executive Officer/Clerk of Court,
By M. Aguirre, Deputy Clerk

Attorneys for Plaintiff

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

MATTHEW MURRAY, individually, and on
behalf of aggrieved employees pursuant to the
Private Attorneys General Act ("PAGA");

Plaintiff,

v.

NINTH AVENUE FOODS, LLC, a California
limited liability company; HERITAGE
DISTRIBUTING COMPANY d/b/a NINTH
AVENUE FOODS, a California limited
liability company; and DOES 1 through 100,
inclusive;

Defendants.

Case No.: **24STCV11391**

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES
FOR VIOLATION OF LABOR CODE
§ 2698, et seq. (PRIVATE ATTORNEYS
GENERAL ACT OF 2004)**

1 Plaintiff Matthew Murray ("Plaintiff") hereby submits this Complaint against Defendants
2 Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC and Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods and
3 DOES 1 through 100, inclusive (collectively, "Defendants"), individually and on behalf of other
4 current and former aggrieved employees of Defendants for penalties as follows:

5 **INTRODUCTION**

6 1. This representative action is brought pursuant to Labor Code § 2698, *et*
7 *seq.* (the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 ("PAGA")) for Defendants' violations of Labor
8 Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 432.5, 510, 512(a), 551,
9 552, 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802, and the IWC Wage Orders.

10 2. This Complaint challenges Defendants' systemic illegal employment
11 practices resulting in violations of the stated provisions of the Labor Code against the identified
12 group of employees.

13 3. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges Defendants jointly
14 and severally acted intentionally and with deliberate indifference and conscious disregard to the
15 rights of all employees in (1) failing to properly calculate and pay all minimum and overtime
16 wages; (2) failing to pay all meal period wages and rest break wages; (3) failing to provide
17 accurate wage statements; (4) failing to pay all wages due and owing during employment and
18 upon termination of employment; and (5) failing to reimburse all necessary business expenses.

19 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

20 4. This action is brought pursuant to PAGA. The civil penalties sought by
21 Plaintiff exceed the minimal jurisdiction limits of the Superior Court and will be established
22 according to proof at trial.

23 5. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to California
24 Constitution, Article VI, Section 10, which grants the Superior Court original jurisdiction in all
25 causes except those given by statute to other courts. The statutes under which this action is
26 brought do not specify any other basis for jurisdiction.

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6. This Court has jurisdiction over the violations of PAGA and Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 432.5, 510, 512(a), 551, 552, 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802.

7. This Court has jurisdiction over all Defendants because, upon information and belief, each party has sufficient minimum contacts in California, or otherwise intentionally avails itself of California law so as to render the exercise of jurisdiction over it by the California courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

8. Venue is proper in this Court because, upon information and belief, the named Defendants transact business and/or have offices in the state of California, including the County of Los Angeles. The majority of the acts and omissions alleged herein relating to Plaintiff took place in the State of California, County of Los Angeles. Defendants employed Plaintiff within the State of California, County of Los Angeles. Moreover, this action is brought on behalf of the State of California as a private attorney general and has jurisdiction in this venue.

PARTIES

9. Plaintiff Matthew Murray is an individual residing in the State of California. Plaintiff was formerly employed by Defendants.

10. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendants are licensed to do business and actually doing business in the State of California, including the County of Los Angeles.

11. Plaintiff does not know the true names or capacities, whether individual, partner or corporate, of Defendants sued herein as DOES 1 through 100, inclusive, and for that reason, said Defendants are sued under such fictitious names, and Plaintiff prays for leave to amend this complaint when the true names and capacities are known. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that each of Defendants designated as a DOE was responsible in some way for the matters alleged herein and proximately caused Plaintiff and other current and former aggrieved employees to be subject to the illegal employment practices, wrongs and injuries complained of herein.

/ / /

1 **12.** At all times herein mentioned, Defendants, and each of them, were agents,
2 partners, joint venturers, representatives, servants, employees, successors-in-interest, co-
3 conspirators and assigns, each of the other, and at all times relevant hereto were acting within the
4 course and scope of their authority as such agents, partners, joint venturers, representatives,
5 servants, employees, successors, co-conspirators and assigns, and that all acts or omissions
6 alleged herein were duly committed with ratification, knowledge, permission, encouragement,
7 authorization and consent of each Defendant designated herein.

8 **13.** As such, and based upon all the facts and circumstances incident to
9 Defendants' business in California, Defendants are subject to PAGA and Labor Code §§ 201,
10 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 432.5, 510, 512(a), 551, 552, 558,
11 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802.

12 **CAUSE OF ACTION**

13 **(Violation of Labor Code § 2698, *et seq.* ("PAGA"))**

14 **(Against HERITAGE DISTRIBUTING COMPANY d/b/a NINTH AVENUE FOODS,**
15 **LLC and DOES 1 through 100)**

16 **14.** Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs
17 1 through 13, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set
18 forth herein.

19 **15.** The Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 ("PAGA") expressly
20 establishes that any provision of the California Labor Code which provides for a civil penalty to
21 be assessed and collected by the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency
22 ("LWDA"), or any of its departments, divisions, commissions, boards, agencies or employees for
23 a violation of the California Labor Code, may be recovered through a civil action brought by an
24 aggrieved employee on behalf of himself or herself, and other current or former employees.

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1 **16.** On January 25, 2024, Plaintiff provided written notice to the LWDA and
2 Defendants of the specific provisions of the Labor Code he contends were violated, and the
3 theories supporting his contentions. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 1** and incorporated by reference
4 is a copy of the written notice to the LWDA. Plaintiff believes that on or about April 1, 2024, the
5 sixty-five (65) days' notice period expired as to all Defendants, and the LWDA did not take any
6 action to investigate or prosecute this matter. Thus, Plaintiff has exhausted his administrative
7 remedies.

8 **17.** Plaintiff and the other hourly-paid or non-exempt employees are
9 "aggrieved employees" as defined by California Labor Code § 2699(c) in that they are all current
10 or former hourly-paid or non-exempt employees of Defendants who worked for Defendants in
11 the State of California at any time during the period from April 6, 2021, to the present, and one
12 or more of the alleged violations was committed against them.

13 **Failure to Pay Minimum and Overtime Wages**

14 **18.** At all times relevant herein, Defendants were required to compensate their
15 non-exempt employees minimum wages for all hours worked and overtime wages for all hours
16 worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a day or forty (40) hours in a workweek, pursuant to the
17 mandate of Labor Code §§ 510, 1194, 1197, and 1198.

18 **19.** As a policy and practice, Defendants failed to compensate aggrieved
19 current and former employees for all hours worked, resulting in a failure to pay all minimum
20 wages and overtime wages, where applicable.

21 **Failure to Provide Meal Periods and Rest Breaks**

22 **20.** In accordance with the mandates of Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512,
23 Defendants were required to authorize and permit their non-exempt employees to take a
24 10-minute rest break for every four (4) hours worked or major fraction thereof, and were further
25 required to provide their non-exempt employees with a 30-minute meal period for every five (5)
26 hours worked.

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1 **21.** As a policy and practice, Defendants failed to provide aggrieved current
2 and former employees with legally mandated meal periods and rest breaks and failed to pay proper
3 compensation for this failure.

4 **Failure to Timely Pay Wages During Employment**

5 **22.** At all times relevant herein, Defendants were required to pay their
6 employees within a specified time period pursuant to the mandate of Labor Code § 204.

7 **23.** As a policy and practice, Defendants failed to pay aggrieved current and
8 former employees all wages due and owing them within the required time period.

9 **Failure to Timely Pay Wages Upon Termination**

10 **24.** At all times relevant herein, Defendants were required to pay their
11 employees all wages owed in a timely fashion at the end of employment pursuant to California
12 Labor Code §§ 201 to 204.

13 **25.** As a result of Defendants' Labor Code violations alleged above,
14 Defendants failed to pay aggrieved former employees their final wages pursuant to Labor Code
15 §§ 201 to 204 and accordingly owe waiting time penalties pursuant to Labor Code § 203.

16 **Failure to Provide Complete and Accurate Wage Statements**

17 **26.** At all times relevant herein, Defendants were required to keep *accurate*
18 records regarding their California employees pursuant to the mandate of Labor Code §§ 226 and
19 1174.

20 **27.** As a result of Defendants' various Labor Code violations, Defendants
21 failed to keep accurate records regarding aggrieved current and former employees. For example,
22 Defendants failed in their affirmative obligation to keep accurate records regarding aggrieved
23 current and former employees' gross wages earned, total hours worked, all deductions, net wages
24 earned, and all applicable hourly rates and the number of hours worked at each hourly rate.

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Failure to Reimburse Business Expenses

28. At all times relevant herein, Defendants were required to reimburse its employees for any and all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employees in direct consequences of the discharge or his or her duties pursuant to the mandate of Labor Code §§ 2800 and 2802.

29. As a policy and practice, Defendants failed to pay aggrieved current and former employees all business expenses incurred and owing them within the required time period.

Penalties

30. Pursuant to California Labor Code § 2699, Plaintiff, individually, and on behalf of current and former aggrieved employees, requests and is entitled to recover from Defendants, and each of them, civil penalties, interest, attorneys' fees and costs pursuant, including but not limited to:

- a.** Penalties under California Labor Code § 2699 in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial violation, and two hundred dollars (\$200) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent violation;
- b.** Penalties under California Code of Regulations Title 8 § 11040 in the amount of fifty dollars (\$50) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial violation, and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent violation;
- c.** Penalties under California Labor Code § 210 in addition to, and entirely independent and apart from, any other penalty provided in the California Labor Code in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial violation, and two hundred dollars (\$200) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent violation;

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- d. Penalties under Labor Code § 1197.1 in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial violation, and two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent violation;
- e. Any and all additional penalties as provided by the Labor Code and/or other statutes; and
- f. Attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code §§ 210, 1194, and 2699, and any other applicable statute.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, individually and as a representative of current and former aggrieved employees pursuant to PAGA, prays for judgment as follows:

1. Upon the Cause of Action, for civil penalties pursuant to statute as set forth in Labor Code § 2698, *et seq.*, for Defendants' violations of Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 432.5, 510, 512(a), 551, 552, 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802;
2. Upon the Cause of Action, for costs and attorneys' fees pursuant to Labor Code §§ 210, 218.5, 1194, and 2699, and any other applicable statute; and
3. For such other and further relief the court may deem just and proper.

Dated: May 6, 2024

JUSTICE LAW CORPORATION

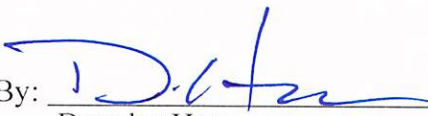
By: 
Douglas Han
Shunt Tatavos-Gharajeh
Attorneys for Plaintiff

EXHIBIT 1

January 25, 2024

BY U.S. MAIL/ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

PAGAfilings@dir.ca.gov

State of California

Labor & Workforce Development Agency

800 Capitol Mall, MIC-55

Sacramento, California 95814

**Re: NINTH AVENUE FOODS, LLC and HERITAGE DISTRIBUTING COMPANY
d/b/a NINTH AVENUE FOODS
LWDA Case No. 839088-21**

Dear Representative:

We hereby amend our April 6, 2022, letter sent to your office in compliance with the reporting requirements of California Labor Code section 2699.3. A true and correct copy of the April 6, 2022, letter is attached to this submission as **Exhibit 1** for reference. We are amending that letter to replace the named representative of aggrieved employees, Fernando Ramirez, with Matthew Murray.

We have been retained to represent Matthew Murray against Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC and Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods (including any and all affiliates, managers, members, subsidiaries, and parents, and their shareholders, officers, directors, and employees), any individual, owner, officer or managing agent acting on behalf of an "Employer" pursuant to California Labor Code section 558.1, and DOES 1-20¹ for violations of California wage-and-hour laws (hereinafter collectively referred to as "NINTH AVENUE").

Mr. Murray is pursuing his California Labor Code sections 2698, *et seq.*, the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 ("PAGA") claim on a representative basis. Therefore, Mr. Murray may seek penalties for violations of the Labor Code on behalf of the State of California and aggrieved employees, which are recoverable under PAGA. This letter is sent in compliance with the reporting requirements of California Labor Code section 2699.3.

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¹ Mr. Murray does not know the true names or capacities, whether individual, partner or corporate, of DOES 1 through 20, inclusive, and for that reason, said DOES are designated under such fictitious names. Mr. Murray will amend this notice when the true names and capacities are known. Mr. Murray is informed and believes that each DOE was responsible in some way for the matters alleged herein and proximately caused Mr. Murray and other current and former aggrieved employees to be subject to the illegal employment practices, wrongs and injuries complained of herein.

Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC is a California limited liability company located at 2370 Grand Ave., Long Beach, California 90815. Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods is a California corporation located at 2370 Grand Ave., Long Beach, California 90815.

NINTH AVENUE employed Mr. Murray as an hourly-paid non-exempt Forklift Driver within one year of the date of this letter (until or until around June 2023) in the State of California. NINTH AVENUE directly controlled the wages, hours and/or working conditions of Mr. Murray's and other aggrieved employees' employment, including direction, retention, scheduling, supervision, and termination.

The "aggrieved employees" that Mr. Murray may seek penalties on behalf of are all current and former hourly-paid or non-exempt employees (whether hired directly or through a staffing agency) of NINTH AVENUE within the State of California.

NINTH AVENUE failed to properly pay its hourly-paid or non-exempt employees for all hours worked, failed to properly compensate minimum and overtime wages, failed to properly provide legally mandated meal and rest breaks or pay premium wages in lieu thereof, failed to issue compliant wage statements, and failed to reimburse for all necessary business-related costs and expenses, thus resulting in Labor Code violations as stated below.

Pursuant to *Huff v. Securitas Security Services USA, Inc.* (2018) 23 Cal. App. 5th 745, 751, an employee who brings a representative action and was affected by at least one of the violations alleged in the complaint has standing to pursue penalties on behalf of the state not only for that violation, but for violations affecting other employees as well. Accordingly, Mr. Murray has standing to pursue penalties on behalf of the state for violations affecting all aggrieved employees at NINTH AVENUE, regardless of their classification, job title, location, or whether they were hired directly or through a staffing agency.

NINTH AVENUE has violated and/or continues to violate, among other provisions of the California Labor Code and applicable wage law, California Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 432.5, 510, 512(a), 551, 552, 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802, and the IWC Wage Orders.

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California Labor Code sections 510, 1194, and 1198 require employers to pay time-and-a-half or double-time overtime wages and make it unlawful to work employees for hours longer than eight hours in one day and/or over forty hours in one week without paying the premium overtime rates. During the relevant time period, Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees routinely worked in excess of 8 hours in a day and 40 hours in a week. NINTH AVENUE failed to compensate Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees for all hours worked and performing off-the-clock work, including pre- and post-shift, and during meal breaks. NINTH AVENUE also failed to include non-discretionary bonuses into aggrieved employees' regular rate of pay for purposes of overtime compensation. Therefore, Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees were entitled to receive certain wages for overtime compensation, but they were not paid for all overtime hours worked.

California Labor Code section 246 requires that employers provide employees with paid sick leave of not less than one hour per every 30 hours worked. California Labor Code section 246(l) also requires that paid sick leave be paid at a non-exempt employee's regular rate of pay for the workweek in which the employee uses paid sick time or at a rate calculated by dividing the employee's total wages, not including overtime premium pay, by the employee's total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90 days of employment. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to pay aggrieved employees paid sick leave that complied with California Labor Code section 246, by, for example, failing to pay paid sick leave at a non-exempt employee's regular rate of pay or at a rate calculated by dividing the employee's total wages, not including overtime premium pay, by the employee's total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90 days of employment.

California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512(a) require employers to pay an employee one additional hour of pay at the employee's regular rate for each workday that a meal or rest break is not provided. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE routinely required Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees to work through, interrupt, cut short, and/or delay their meal and rest breaks to comply with NINTH AVENUE's policies and expectations and assist production. NINTH AVENUE failed to provide coverage to Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees so they may be relieved of all work duties and take legally mandated meal and rest breaks. Lastly, NINTH AVENUE failed to authorize and permit Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees to take the requisite number of meal and rest breaks, including second meal breaks and third rest breaks, when working shifts exceeding 10 hours in length. Despite these facts, NINTH AVENUE failed to compensate Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees all the premium wages they were owed, including failing to pay premium wages at aggrieved employees' regular rate of pay.

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California Labor Code section 551 states “[e]very person employed in any occupation of labor is entitled to one day’s rest therefrom in seven.” Section 552 further states “[n]o employer of labor shall cause his employees to work more than six days in seven.” NINTH AVENUE required aggrieved employees to work seven days in a row or more without one day’s rest.

California Labor Code section 432.5 states “[n]o employer, or agent, manager, superintendent, or officer thereof, shall require any employee or applicant for employment to agree, in writing, to any term or condition which is known by such employer, or agent, manager, superintendent, or officer thereof to be prohibited by law.” NINTH AVENUE required aggrieved employees to execute arbitration agreements as a condition of employment despite knowing that such agreements are prohibited under Labor Code section 432.6.

California Labor Code section 201 requires that if an employer discharges an employee, the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately. California Labor Code section 202 requires that if an employee not having a written contract for a definite period quits their employment, their wages shall become due and payable not later than 72 hours thereafter, unless the employee has given 72 hours’ previous notice of their intention to quit, in which case the employee is entitled to their wages at the time of quitting. California Labor Code section 203 provides that if an employer willfully fails to pay, without abatement or reduction, in accordance with Labor Code sections 201, 201.3, 201.5, 201.6, 201.8, 201.9, 202, and 205.5, any wages of an employee who is discharged or who quits, the wages of the employee shall continue as a penalty from the due date thereof at the same rate until paid or until an action therefor is commenced; but the wages shall not continue for more than 30 days. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to pay Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees all wages, including for uncompensated off-the-clock work, unpaid overtime premiums and premium wages for failing to provide legally mandated meal and rest breaks, due to them within any time period specified by California Labor Code sections 201 and 202 and therefore is liable under California Labor Code sections 203 and 210.

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California Labor Code section 204 requires that all wages earned by any person in any employment between the 1st and the 15th days, inclusive, of any calendar month, other than those wages due upon termination of an employee, are due and payable between the 16th and the 26th day of the month during which the labor was performed, and that all wages earned by any person in any employment between the 16th and the last day, inclusive, of any calendar month, other than those wages due upon termination of an employee, are due and payable between the 1st and the 10th day of the following month. California Labor Code section 204 also requires that all wages earned for labor in excess of the normal work period shall be paid no later than the payday for the next regular payroll period. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to pay Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees all wages due to them, including for uncompensated off-the-clock work, unpaid overtime premiums and premium wages for failing to provide legally mandated meal and rest breaks within any time period specified by California Labor Code section 204, and is therefore liable under California Labor Code section 210.

California Labor Code section 226 requires employers to make, keep and provide complete and accurate itemized wage statements to their employees. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE did not provide Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees with complete and accurate itemized wage statements. The wage statements they received from NINTH AVENUE were in violation of California Labor Code section 226(a). The violations include, but are not limited to, the failure to include (1) gross wages earned by Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees, (2) total hours worked by Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate by Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees, (4) all deductions for Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees, (5) net wages earned by Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which aggrieved employees are paid, (7) the name of the aggrieved employee and only the last four digits of their social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by aggrieved employees.

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California Labor Code section 558 allows recovery of penalties. Pursuant to the code, (a) Any employer or other person acting on behalf of an employer who violates, or causes to be violated, a section of this chapter or any provision regulating hours and days of work in any order of the Industrial Welfare Commission shall be subject to a civil penalty as follows: (1) For any initial violation, fifty dollars (\$50) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the employee was underpaid in addition to an amount sufficient to recover underpaid wages. (2) For each subsequent violation, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the employee was underpaid in addition to an amount sufficient to recover underpaid wages. (3) Wages recovered pursuant to this section shall be paid to the affected employee. Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees have been denied their wages and premium wages and, therefore, are entitled to penalties.

California Labor Code section 1174(d) requires an employer to keep, at a central location in the state or at the plants or establishments at which employees are employed, payroll records showing the hours worked daily by and the wages paid to, and the number of piece-rate units earned by and any applicable piece rate paid to, employees employed at the respective plants or establishments. These records shall be kept with rules established for this purpose by the commission, but in any case, shall be kept on file for not less than three years. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to keep accurate and complete payroll records showing the hours worked daily and the wages paid to Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees.

California Labor Code sections 1194, 1197 and 1197.1 provide the minimum wage to be paid to employees, and the payment of a lesser wage than the minimum so fixed is unlawful. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE did not provide Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees with the minimum wages to which they were entitled despite constructive and actual knowledge of off-the-clock work, including pre- and post-shift, and during meal breaks.

California Labor Code sections 2800 and 2802 require an employer to reimburse its employee for all necessary expenditures incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the discharge of their job duties or in direct consequence of their obedience to the directions of the employer. During their employment, Mr. Murray and other aggrieved employees incurred necessary business-related expenses and costs that were not fully reimbursed by NINTH AVENUE, including for purchasing equipment they were required to wear while working and using their personal cell phones for work-related purposes.

We believe that Mr. Murray and other current and former California-based hourly-paid or non-exempt employees are entitled to penalties as allowed under California Labor Code sections 2698, *et seq.* for violations of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 432.5, 510, 512(a), 551, 552, 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802, and the IWC Wage Orders.

California Labor Code section 2699.3 requires that a claimant send a certified letter to the employer in question and the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency setting forth the claims, and the basis for the claims, thereby giving the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency an opportunity to investigate the claims and/or take any action it deems appropriate.

The purpose of this letter is to satisfy the requirement created by California Labor Code section 2699 prior to seeking penalties allowed by law for the aforementioned statutory violations. We look forward to determining whether California Labor & Workforce Development Agency intends to take any action in reference to these claims. We kindly request that you respond to this notice according to the time frame contemplated by the California Labor Code.

Mr. Murray will seek these penalties on his own behalf and on behalf of other similarly situated California-based hourly-paid or non-exempt employees of NINTH AVENUE within one year of the date of the original July 23, 2021, letter, as allowed by law.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your attention to this matter and the noble cause you advance each and every day.

Very truly yours,

JUSTICE LAW CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Han", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Douglas Han, Esq.

CC: (By Certified U.S. Mail Only):

Ted S. DeGroot
c/o Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods
2370 Grand Ave.
Long Beach, California 90815
Agent for Service of Process for Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods

Legal Department
c/o Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods
425 S 9th Ave.
City of Industry, California 91746

LWDA
January 25, 2024
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Richard S. Price II
c/o Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC
1235 N. Harbor Blvd., Suite 200
Fullerton, California 92832
Agent for Service of Process for Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC

Legal Department
c/o Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC
2370 Grand Ave.
Long Beach, California 90815

EXHIBIT 1

April 6, 2022

BY U.S. EMAIL/ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

PAGAfilings@dir.ca.gov

State of California

Labor & Workforce Development Agency

800 Capitol Mall, MIC-55

Sacramento, California 95814

**Re: NINTH AVENUE FOODS, LLC AND HERITAGE DISTRIBUTING COMPANY
D/B/A NINTH AVENUE FOODS**

Dear Representative:

We hereby amend our July 23, 2021, letter sent to your office in compliance with the reporting requirements of California Labor Code section 2699.3. A true and correct copy of the July 23, 2021, letter is attached to this submission as **Exhibit A** for reference. We are amending the notice by substituting Fernando Ramirez as the representative of the aggrieved employees in place of Bernardo Salgado and identifying an additional "employer" – Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods – responsible for the alleged violations.

We have been retained to represent Fernando Ramirez against Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC and Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods (including any and all affiliates, managers, members, subsidiaries, and parents, and their shareholders, officers, directors, and employees), any individual, owner, officer and managing agent, DOES 1-10 as an "Employer" or person acting on behalf of an "Employer" pursuant to California Labor Code section 558.1, and DOES 11-20¹ for violations of California wage-and-hour laws (hereinafter collectively referred to as "NINTH AVENUE").

Mr. Ramirez is pursuing his California Labor Code section 2698, *et seq.*, the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 ("PAGA") claim on a representative basis. Therefore, Mr. Ramirez may seek penalties and wages for violations of the Labor Code on behalf of the State of California and aggrieved employees, which are recoverable under PAGA. This letter is sent in compliance with the reporting requirements of California Labor Code section 2699.3.

¹ Mr. Ramirez does not know the true names or capacities, whether individual, partner or corporate, of DOES 1 through 20, inclusive, and for that reason, said DOES are designated under such fictitious names. Mr. Ramirez will amend this notice when the true names and capacities are known. Mr. Ramirez is informed and believes that each DOE was responsible in some way for the matters alleged herein and proximately caused Mr. Ramirez and other current and former aggrieved employees to be subject to the illegal employment practices, wrongs and injuries complained of herein.

Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC is California limited liability company located at 2370 Grand Avenue, Long Beach, California 90815. Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods is a California limited liability company located at 2370 Grand Ave., Long Beach, California 90815.

NINTH AVENUE employed Mr. Ramirez as an hourly-paid non-exempt Machine Operator within one year of the data of this letter (until in or around February 2022²) in the State of California. NINTH AVENUE directly controlled the wages, hours and/or working conditions of Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees' employment, including direction, retention, scheduling, supervision, and termination.

The "aggrieved employees" that Mr. Ramirez may seek penalties on behalf of are all current and former hourly-paid or non-exempt employees (whether hired directly or through a staffing agency) of NINTH AVENUE within the State of California.

NINTH AVENUE failed to properly pay its hourly-paid or non-exempt employees for all hours worked, failed to properly provide or compensate minimum and overtime wages and for meal and rest breaks, failed to issue compliant wage statements and failed to reimburse for all necessary business-related costs and expenses, thus resulting in other Labor Code violations as stated below.

Pursuant to *Huff v. Securitas Security Services*, 23 Cal. App. 5th 745, 751 (2018), an employee who brings a representative action and was affected by at least one of the violations alleged in the complaint has standing to pursue penalties on behalf of the state not only for that violation, but for violations affecting other employees as well. Accordingly, Mr. Ramirez has standing to pursue penalties on behalf of the state for violations affecting all the aggrieved employees at NINTH AVENUE, regardless of their classification, job title, location, or whether they were hired directly or through a staffing agency.

NINTH AVENUE has violated and/or continues to violate, among other provisions of the California Labor Code and applicable wage law, California Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 510, 512(a), 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802, and the IWC Wage Orders.

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² Per Emergency Rule 9 (Tolling statute of limitations for civil causes of action) of the Judicial Council's Emergency Rules Related to COVID-19, all statute of limitations for civil causes of action that exceed 180 days are tolled from April 6, 2020 until October 1, 2020. Therefore, the one (1) year statute of limitations for Mr. Ramirez's PAGA cause of action is tolled.

California Labor Code sections 510, 1194, and 1198 require employers to pay at least minimum wage for all hours worked, pay time-and-a-half, or double-time overtime wages, and make it unlawful to work employees for hours longer than eight hours in one day and/or over forty hours in one week without paying the premium overtime rates. During the relevant time period, Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees routinely worked in excess of 8 hours in a day and 40 hours in a week. NINTH AVENUE failed to compensate Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees for all hours worked and performing off-the-clock work, including pre- and post-shift, donning and doffing uniforms, and during meal breaks. NINTH AVENUE also failed to include non-discretionary bonuses and incentives in aggrieved employees' regular rate of pay for purposes of overtime compensation. Therefore, Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees were entitled to receive certain wages for overtime compensation, but they were not paid for all overtime hours worked.

California Labor Code section 246 requires that employers provide employees with paid sick leave of not less than one hour per every 30 hours worked. California Labor Code section 246(l) also requires that paid sick leave be paid at a non-exempt employee's regular rate of pay for the workweek in which the employee uses paid sick time or at a rate calculated by dividing the employee's total wages, not including overtime premium pay, by the employee's total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90 days of employment. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to pay Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees with paid sick leave that complied with California Labor Code section 246, by, for example, failing to pay paid sick leave at non-exempt employee's regular rate of pay or at a rate calculated by dividing the employee's total wages, not including overtime premium pay, by the employee's total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90 days of employment.

California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512 require employers to pay an employee one additional hour of pay at the employee's regular rate for each workday that a meal or rest break is not provided. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE routinely required Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees to work through, interrupt, cut short, and/or delay their meal and rest breaks to comply with NINTH AVENUE's policies and expectations. Additionally, NINTH AVENUE failed to provide coverage to Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees so they may be relieved of all work duties and take legally mandated meal and rest breaks. Moreover, NINTH AVENUE failed to authorize and permit Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees to take the requisite number of meal and rest breaks, including second meal breaks and third rest breaks, when working shifts exceeding 10 hours in length. Despite these facts, NINTH AVENUE failed to compensate Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees all the premium wages they were owed at their regular rate of pay.

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California Labor Code section 201 requires that if an employer discharges an employee, the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately. California Labor Code section 202 requires that if an employee not having a written contract for a definite period quits his or her employment, his or her wages shall become due and payable not later than 72 hours thereafter, unless the employee has given 72 hours previous notice of his or her intention to quit, in which case the employee is entitled to his or her wages at the time of quitting. California Labor Code section 203 provides that if an employer willfully fails to pay, without abatement or reduction, in accordance with Labor Code sections 201, 201.3, 201.5, 201.6, 201.8, 201.9, 202, and 205.5, any wages of an employee who is discharged or who quits, the wages of the employee shall continue as a penalty from the due date thereof at the same rate until paid or until an action therefor is commenced; but the wages shall not continue for more than 30 days. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to pay Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees all wages, including for uncompensated off-the-clock work, unpaid overtime premiums and premium wages for failing to provide legally mandated meal and rest breaks, due to them within any time period specified by California Labor Code sections 201 and 203 and therefore is liable under California Labor Code section 203.

California Labor Code section 204 requires that all wages earned by any person in any employment between the 1st and the 15th days, inclusive, of any calendar month, other than those wages due upon termination of an employee, are due and payable between the 16th and the 26th day of the month during which the labor was performed, and that all wages earned by any person in any employment between the 16th and the last day, inclusive, of any calendar month, other than those wages due upon termination of an employee, are due and payable between the 1st and the 10th day of the following month. California Labor Code section 204 also requires that all wages earned for labor in excess of the normal work period shall be paid no later than the payday for the next regular payroll period. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to pay Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees all wages due to them, including for uncompensated off-the-clock work, unpaid overtime premiums and premium wages for failing to provide legally mandated meal and rest breaks within any time period specified by California Labor Code section 204.

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California Labor Code section 226 requires employers to make, keep and provide complete and accurate itemized wage statements to their employees. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE did not provide Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees with complete and accurate itemized wage statements. The wage statements they received from NINTH AVENUE were in violation of California Labor Code section 226(a). The violations include, but are not limited to, the failure to include (1) gross wages earned by Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees, (2) total hours worked by Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate by Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees (4) all deductions for Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees, (5) net wages earned by Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees are paid, (7) the name of the aggrieved employee and only the last four digits of his or her social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees.

California Labor Code section 558 allows recovery of penalties. (a) Any employer or other person acting on behalf of an employer who violates, or causes to be violated, a section of this chapter or any provision regulating hours and days of work in any order of the Industrial Welfare Commission shall be subject to a civil penalty as follows: (1) For any initial violation, fifty dollars (\$50) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the employee was underpaid in addition to an amount sufficient to recover underpaid wages. (2) For each subsequent violation, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the employee was underpaid in addition to an amount sufficient to recover underpaid wages. (3) Wages recovered pursuant to this section shall be paid to the affected employee. Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees have been denied their wages and premium wages and, therefore, are entitled to penalties.

California Labor Code sections 1174(d) requires an employer to keep, at a central location in the state or at the plants or establishments at which employees are employed, payroll records showing the hours worked daily by and the wages paid to, and the number of piece-rate units earned by and any applicable piece rate paid to, employees employed at the respective plants or establishments. These records shall be kept with rules established for this purpose by the commission, but in any case, shall be kept on file for not less than two years. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to keep accurate and complete payroll records showing the hours worked daily and the wages paid, to Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees.

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California Labor Code sections 1194, 1197 and 1197.1 provide the minimum wage to be paid to employees, and the payment of a lesser wage than the minimum so fixed is unlawful. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE did not provide Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees with the minimum wages to which they were entitled despite constructive and actual knowledge of off-the-clock work, including pre- and post-shift, donning and doffing uniforms and during meal breaks.

California Labor Code sections 2800 and 2802 require an employer to reimburse its employee for all necessary expenditures incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the discharge of his or her job duties or in direct consequence of his or her obedience to the directions of the employer. During their employment, Mr. Ramirez and other aggrieved employees incurred necessary business-related expenses and costs that were not fully reimbursed by NINTH AVENUE, including for purchasing equipment they were required to wear while working.

We believe that Mr. Ramirez and other current and former California-based hourly-paid or non-exempt employees are entitled to penalties as allowed under California Labor Code section 2698, *et seq.* for violations of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 510, 512(a), 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802, and the IWC Wage Orders.

California Labor Code section 2699.3 requires that a claimant send a certified letter to the employer in questions and the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency setting forth the claims, and the basis for the claims, thereby giving the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency an opportunity to investigate the claims and/or take any action it deems appropriate.

The purpose of this letter is to satisfy the requirement created by California Labor code section 2699 prior to seeking penalties allowed by law for the aforementioned statutory violations. We look forward to determining whether California Labor & Workforce Development Agency intends to take any action in reference to these claims. We kindly request that you respond to this notice according to the time frame contemplated by the California Labor Code.

Mr. Ramirez will seek these penalties on his own behalf and on behalf of other similarly situated California-based hourly-paid or non-exempt employees of NINTH AVENUE within one year of the date of the original letter, as allowed by law.

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LWDA
April 6, 2022
Page 7 of 7

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your attention to this matter and the noble cause you advance each and every day.

Very truly yours,

JUSTICE LAW CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Han', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Douglas Han, Esq.

CC: (By Certified U.S. Mail Only):

Richard S. Price II
c/o Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC
1235 N. Harbor Blvd., Suite 200
Fullerton, California 92832
Agent for Service of Process for Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC

Ted S Degroot
c/o Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods
2370 Grand Ave
Long Beach, California 90815
Agent for Service of Process for Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods

CC: (By Electronic Mail Only):

Brian C. Sinclair
bsinclair@rutan.com
Peter Hering
PHering@rutan.com

RUTAN & TUCKER, LLP

Counsel of Record for Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC and Heritage Distributing Company d/b/a Ninth Avenue Foods

EXHIBIT A

July 23, 2021

BY U.S. EMAIL/ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

PAGAfilings@dir.ca.gov

State of California

Labor & Workforce Development Agency

800 Capitol Mall, MIC-55

Sacramento, California 95814

Re: NINTH AVENUE FOODS, LLC

Dear Representative:

We have been retained to represent Bernardo Salgado against Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC (including any and all affiliates, managers, members, subsidiaries, and parents, and their shareholders, officers, directors, and employees), any individual, owner, officer and managing agent, DOES 1-10 as an "Employer" or person acting on behalf of an "Employer" pursuant to California Labor Code section 558.1, and DOES 11-20¹ for violations of California wage-and-hour laws (hereinafter collectively referred to as "NINTH AVENUE").

Mr. Salgado is pursuing his California Labor Code section 2698, *et seq.*, the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 ("PAGA") claim on a representative basis. Therefore, Mr. Salgado may seek penalties and wages for violations of the Labor Code on behalf of the State of California and aggrieved employees, which are recoverable under PAGA. This letter is sent in compliance with the reporting requirements of California Labor Code section 2699.3.

Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC is California limited liability company located at 2370 Grand Avenue, Long Beach, California 90815.

NINTH AVENUE employed Mr. Salgado as an hourly-paid non-exempt Pasteurizer/Receiver within one year of the date of this letter (until in or around January of 2021²) in the State of California. NINTH AVENUE directly controlled the wages, hours and/or working conditions of Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees' employment, including direction, retention, scheduling, supervision, and termination.

¹ Mr. Salgado does not know the true names or capacities, whether individual, partner or corporate, of DOES 1 through 20, inclusive, and for that reason, said DOES are designated under such fictitious names. Mr. Salgado will amend this notice when the true names and capacities are known. Mr. Salgado is informed and believes that each DOE was responsible in some way for the matters alleged herein and proximately caused Mr. Salgado and other current and former aggrieved employees to be subject to the illegal employment practices, wrongs and injuries complained of herein.

² Per Emergency Rule 9 (Tolling statute of limitations for civil causes of action) of the Judicial Council's Emergency Rules Related to COVID-19, all statute of limitations for civil causes of action that exceed 180 days are tolled from April 6, 2020 until October 1, 2020. Therefore, the one (1) year statute of limitations for Mr. Salgado's PAGA cause of action is tolled.

The “aggrieved employees” that Mr. Salgado may seek penalties on behalf of are all current and former hourly-paid or non-exempt employees (whether hired directly or through a staffing agency) of NINTH AVENUE within the State of California.

NINTH AVENUE failed to properly pay its hourly-paid or non-exempt employees for all hours worked, failed to properly provide or compensate minimum and overtime wages and for meal and rest breaks, failed to issue compliant wage statements and failed to reimburse for all necessary business-related costs and expenses, thus resulting in other Labor Code violations as stated below.

Pursuant to *Huff v. Securitas Security Services*, 23 Cal. App. 5th 745, 751 (2018), an employee who brings a representative action and was affected by at least one of the violations alleged in the complaint has standing to pursue penalties on behalf of the state not only for that violation, but for violations affecting other employees as well. Accordingly, Mr. Salgado has standing to pursue penalties on behalf of the state for violations affecting all the aggrieved employees at NINTH AVENUE, regardless of their classification, job title, location, or whether they were hired directly or through a staffing agency.

NINTH AVENUE has violated and/or continues to violate, among other provisions of the California Labor Code and applicable wage law, California Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 510, 512(a), 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802, and the IWC Wage Orders.

California Labor Code sections 510, 1194, and 1198 require employers to pay at least minimum wage for all hours worked, pay time-and-a-half, or double-time overtime wages, and make it unlawful to work employees for hours longer than eight hours in one day and/or over forty hours in one week without paying the premium overtime rates. During the relevant time period, Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees routinely worked in excess of 8 hours in a day and 40 hours in a week. NINTH AVENUE failed to compensate Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees for all hours worked and performing off-the-clock work, including pre- and post-shift, donning and doffing uniforms, and during meal breaks. NINTH AVENUE also failed to include non-discretionary bonuses and incentives in aggrieved employees’ regular rate of pay for purposes of overtime compensation. Therefore, Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees were entitled to receive certain wages for overtime compensation, but they were not paid for all overtime hours worked.

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California Labor Code section 246 requires that employers provide employees with paid sick leave of not less than one hour per every 30 hours worked. California Labor Code section 246(l) also requires that paid sick leave be paid at a non-exempt employee's regular rate of pay for the workweek in which the employee uses paid sick time or at a rate calculated by dividing the employee's total wages, not including overtime premium pay, by the employee's total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90 days of employment. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to pay Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees with paid sick leave that complied with California Labor Code section 246, by, for example, failing to pay paid sick leave at non-exempt employee's regular rate of pay or at a rate calculated by dividing the employee's total wages, not including overtime premium pay, by the employee's total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90 days of employment.

California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512 require employers to pay an employee one additional hour of pay at the employee's regular rate for each workday that a meal or rest break is not provided. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE routinely required Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees to work through, interrupt, cut short, and/or delay their meal and rest breaks to comply with NINTH AVENUE's policies and expectations. Additionally, NINTH AVENUE failed to provide coverage to Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees so they may be relieved of all work duties and take legally mandated meal and rest breaks. Moreover, NINTH AVENUE failed to authorize and permit Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees to take the requisite number of meal and rest breaks, including second meal breaks and third rest breaks, when working shifts exceeding 10 hours in length. Despite these facts, NINTH AVENUE failed to compensate Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees all the premium wages they were owed at their regular rate of pay.

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California Labor Code section 201 requires that if an employer discharges an employee, the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately. California Labor Code section 202 requires that if an employee not having a written contract for a definite period quits his or her employment, his or her wages shall become due and payable not later than 72 hours thereafter, unless the employee has given 72 hours previous notice of his or her intention to quit, in which case the employee is entitled to his or her wages at the time of quitting. California Labor Code section 203 provides that if an employer willfully fails to pay, without abatement or reduction, in accordance with Labor Code sections 201, 201.3, 201.5, 201.6, 201.8, 201.9, 202, and 205.5, any wages of an employee who is discharged or who quits, the wages of the employee shall continue as a penalty from the due date thereof at the same rate until paid or until an action therefor is commenced; but the wages shall not continue for more than 30 days. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to pay Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees all wages, including for uncompensated off-the-clock work, unpaid overtime premiums and premium wages for failing to provide legally mandated meal and rest breaks, due to them within any time period specified by California Labor Code sections 201 and 203 and therefore is liable under California Labor Code section 203.

California Labor Code section 204 requires that all wages earned by any person in any employment between the 1st and the 15th days, inclusive, of any calendar month, other than those wages due upon termination of an employee, are due and payable between the 16th and the 26th day of the month during which the labor was performed, and that all wages earned by any person in any employment between the 16th and the last day, inclusive, of any calendar month, other than those wages due upon termination of an employee, are due and payable between the 1st and the 10th day of the following month. California Labor Code section 204 also requires that all wages earned for labor in excess of the normal work period shall be paid no later than the payday for the next regular payroll period. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to pay Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees all wages due to them, including for uncompensated off-the-clock work, unpaid overtime premiums and premium wages for failing to provide legally mandated meal and rest breaks within any time period specified by California Labor Code section 204.

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California Labor Code section 226 requires employers to make, keep and provide complete and accurate itemized wage statements to their employees. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE did not provide Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees with complete and accurate itemized wage statements. The wage statements they received from NINTH AVENUE were in violation of California Labor Code section 226(a). The violations include, but are not limited to, the failure to include (1) gross wages earned by Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees, (2) total hours worked by Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate by Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees (4) all deductions for Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees, (5) net wages earned by Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees are paid, (7) the name of the aggrieved employee and only the last four digits of his or her social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees.

California Labor Code section 558 allows recovery of penalties. (a) Any employer or other person acting on behalf of an employer who violates, or causes to be violated, a section of this chapter or any provision regulating hours and days of work in any order of the Industrial Welfare Commission shall be subject to a civil penalty as follows: (1) For any initial violation, fifty dollars (\$50) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the employee was underpaid in addition to an amount sufficient to recover underpaid wages. (2) For each subsequent violation, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the employee was underpaid in addition to an amount sufficient to recover underpaid wages. (3) Wages recovered pursuant to this section shall be paid to the affected employee. Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees have been denied their wages and premium wages and, therefore, are entitled to penalties.

California Labor Code sections 1174(d) requires an employer to keep, at a central location in the state or at the plants or establishments at which employees are employed, payroll records showing the hours worked daily by and the wages paid to, and the number of piece-rate units earned by and any applicable piece rate paid to, employees employed at the respective plants or establishments. These records shall be kept with rules established for this purpose by the commission, but in any case, shall be kept on file for not less than two years. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE failed to keep accurate and complete payroll records showing the hours worked daily and the wages paid, to Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees.

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California Labor Code sections 1194, 1197 and 1197.1 provide the minimum wage to be paid to employees, and the payment of a lesser wage than the minimum so fixed is unlawful. During the relevant time period, NINTH AVENUE did not provide Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees with the minimum wages to which they were entitled despite constructive and actual knowledge of off-the-clock work, including pre- and post-shift, donning and doffing uniforms and during meal breaks.

California Labor Code sections 2800 and 2802 require an employer to reimburse its employee for all necessary expenditures incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the discharge of his or her job duties or in direct consequence of his or her obedience to the directions of the employer. During their employment, Mr. Salgado and other aggrieved employees incurred necessary business-related expenses and costs that were not fully reimbursed by NINTH AVENUE, including for purchasing equipment they were required to wear while working.

We believe that Mr. Salgado and other current and former California-based hourly-paid or non-exempt employees are entitled to penalties as allowed under California Labor Code section 2698, *et seq.* for violations of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 510, 512(a), 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802, and the IWC Wage Orders.

California Labor Code section 2699.3 requires that a claimant send a certified letter to the employer in questions and the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency setting forth the claims, and the basis for the claims, thereby giving the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency an opportunity to investigate the claims and/or take any action it deems appropriate.

The purpose of this letter is to satisfy the requirement created by California Labor code section 2699 prior to seeking penalties allowed by law for the aforementioned statutory violations. We look forward to determining whether California Labor & Workforce Development Agency intends to take any action in reference to these claims. We kindly request that you respond to this notice according to the time frame contemplated by the California Labor Code.

Mr. Salgado will seek these penalties on his own behalf and on behalf of other similarly situated California-based hourly-paid or non-exempt employees of NINTH AVENUE within one year of the date of this letter, as allowed by law.

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LWDA
July 23, 2021
Page 7 of 7

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your attention to this matter and the noble cause you advance each and every day.

Very truly yours,

JUSTICE LAW CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Han', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Douglas Han, Esq.

CC: (By Certified U.S. Mail Only):

Richard S. Price II
c/o Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC
1235 N. Harbor Blvd., Suite 200
Fullerton, California 92832
Agent for Service of Process for Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC

CC: (By Electronic Mail Only):

Brian C. Sinclair
bsinclair@rutan.com
Peter Hering
PHering@rutan.com
RUTAN & TUCKER, LLP
Counsel of Record for Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC

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I am employed in the County of Los Angeles, State of California. I am over the age of 18 and not a party to the within action. My business address is 751 N. Fair Oaks Ave., Ste. 101 Pasadena, California 91103. My electronic service address is manderson@justicelawcorp.com

On May 7, 2024, I served the foregoing document described as

**COMPLAINT FOR CIVIL PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION OF LABOR CODE
§ 2698, *et seq.* (PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT OF 2004)**

for the following case: **Murray v. Ninth Avenue Foods, LLC, et al.**
 LWDA/Court Case No.: **LWDA-CM-839088-21**
24STCV11391
Los Angeles County Superior Court

on interested parties in this action by electronically submitting as follows:

**State of California
Labor & Workforce Development Agency
800 Capitol Mall, MIC-55
Sacramento, California 95814**

[X] BY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

Pursuant to California Senate Bill No. 836, I caused the documents described above to be electronically submitted by and through the procedure stated on the website of the State of California Labor and Workforce Development Agency.

[X] STATE

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

Executed on May 7, 2024, at Pasadena, California.

Moini Andarsen

Mariah Anderson