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13 Attorneys for Plaintiff Enrique Barajas
14 and all Aggrieved Employees

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**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF MADERA**

ENRIQUE BARAJAS, on behalf of himself
and all other aggrieved employees,

Plaintiff,

v.

VLOT CALF RANCH, INC., a California
corporation; CASE VLOT, an individual;
AND DARCY VLOT, an individual; and
DOES 1 through 100, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: MCV087569
[Hon. Michael J. Jurkovich, Dept. 411B]

**DECLARATION OF ADRIAN C. BYRNE
IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFF'S MOTION
FOR APPROVAL OF REPRESENTATIVE
PAGA SETTLEMENT**

Date: May 5, 2025
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Dept.: DBOS (200 W. 4th St.)

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I, Adrian C. Byrne, declare as follows:

1. I am an attorney licensed to practice before all of the courts of the State of California. I am co-lead counsel of record for Plaintiff Enrique Barajas (“Plaintiff” or “Barajas”) in the above-captioned action. I have personal knowledge of the facts set forth in this declaration and, if called upon to do so, could and would testify competently thereto, except where I make a statement on information and belief, in which case I am informed and believe the statement to be true.

2. I, along with my co-counsel John Van Hook of Van Hook Law Firm, have been representing Plaintiff and the allegedly aggrieved employees throughout this litigation. I make this declaration in support of Plaintiff's Motion for Approval of Representative PAGA Settlement (the "Motion").

3. The following is a brief description of my legal background: I graduated from Bristol Law School in the United Kingdom and was called to the Bar of England and Wales in 2010. In 2013, I became licensed to practice as a Solicitor of England and Wales. I subsequently became licensed as an attorney in California in 2015.

4. For over 9 years, I have worked exclusively on employment law with a focus on complex and individual wage and hour cases. During that time, I estimate that I have litigated over 100 wage and hour actions in my private practice, including over 50 class and/or representative actions under the California Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 (“PAGA”).

5. I have been selected for several years to Southern California Super Lawyers – Rising Star list in the category of “Employment Litigation Plaintiff”.

6. Since the outset of this matter, which began almost 3 ½ years ago, the prosecution of this action has involved significant financial risk. My co-counsel and I undertook this action on a contingent basis, investing significant time, resources, and out-of-pocket costs, with no guarantee of recovery, and at the expense of other work that we could have performed.

7. It has been my custom and practice, both before this case and throughout the duration of this case, to enter my time consistent with my firm's timekeeping policies. That is, I use a digital timekeeping system and enter time to the tenth of the hour. I generally enter time directly after completing a billable task and, if that is not possible, I enter it as soon as practicable thereafter. Consistent with this practice, I kept accurate, contemporaneous records of my billable time on this representative PAGA action. I kept separate records for my billable time spent on Plaintiff's individual arbitration. For tasks that related to both matters, including the first mediation in 2022, I apportioned my time between the two matters. I billed a total of 71.4 hours on this representative PAGA action. This does not include additional hours that I anticipate I will work in connection with the implementation of this PAGA settlement.

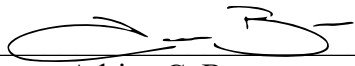
8. In connection with Plaintiff's individual arbitration, Plaintiff moved for an award of attorney's fees and costs related to work carried out on the individual arbitration. On April 11, 2024, the Arbitrator issued her fees and costs Order. As part of this Order, the arbitrator approved my billing rate of \$465.00 per hour, in effect at that time, finding that my rate was "well in line (and even below) what is charged by comparable counsel." Although my billing rate has since increased, for purposes of this Motion and calculating my lodestar, I use my prior hourly rate of \$465. Accordingly, I calculate my current lodestar on the representative PAGA action to be **\$33,201.00** (71.4 hours x \$465).

9. At every stage of this litigation, including our investigation prior to filing this action, Mr. Barajas has provided regular, invaluable assistance to myself and my co-counsel and was always engaged in the pursuit of this case. Mr. Barajas participated in two full-day mediations, sat for a full-day deposition, and participated in dozens of telephone calls and Zoom calls with my co-counsel and me. Mr. Barajas's participation in many of these events necessitated taking unpaid leave from work. In light of his financial circumstances as a low-wage earner, this loss of income imposed a substantial economic hardship. Without Mr. Barajas's efforts and willingness to step forward on behalf of his former co-workers, we would not have been able to prosecute this case and reach this resolution on behalf of the State and the

1 aggrieved employees. For all of these reasons, I believe that the requested enhancement of
2 \$10,000 is fair and reasonable.

3 10. For all of the reasons set forth in Plaintiff's Motion and based on my experience
4 litigating and settling wage and hour and representative PAGA cases, I believe the settlement
5 reached in this case is fair, reasonable, and an excellent outcome for the State of California and
6 the aggrieved employees. I strongly support this settlement and Plaintiff's Motion.

7 11. I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the
8 foregoing is true and correct. Executed on April 3, 2024.

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11 Adrian C. Byrne
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