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

JOEL ARELLANO, individually, on a
representative basis, and on behalf of all
others similarly situated;

Plaintiff,

vs.

PACIFIC AWARD METALS, INC., a
California Corporation; and DOES 1
through 20, inclusive;

Defendants.

Case No.: 22STCV13489
*[Assigned to Hon. David S. Cunningham, III,
Dept 11, for all purposes]*

**DECLARATION OF PLAINTIFF JOEL
ARELLANO IN SUPPORT OF MOTION
FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF CLASS
ACTION SETTLEMENT**

Complaint filed: April 22, 2022

I, Joel Arellano, state and declare:

1. I am the Plaintiff in the above captioned action and have personal knowledge of all matters stated herein and could competently testify thereto. I make this declaration in support of the motion for preliminary approval of the class action settlement. I believe that the settlement is fair and reasonable and constitutes a fair resolution of the claims alleged.

2. During my employment with Defendant, I thought there were issues with my lunch breaks and rest breaks. I started researching California law and contacted attorneys regarding these issues.

3. I then contacted my attorneys (Lauby, Mankin & Lauby) and discussed these

1 issues. As a part of these discussion, I could either bring a class action to help all of the
2 employees, but I would have to put their interests ahead of my own, or I could bring my
3 individual case and claims and attempt to maximize my individual recovery. This decision was
4 very difficult because I wanted to help everyone else that was wronged by the company, but I
5 also wanted maximize my individual recovery. I was also concerned that, if I brought this as a
6 class action, I might get labeled as a whistleblower, which might make it hard to find a job in the
7 same field in the future. I eventually decided that – despite the risks – it was important to bring
8 these claims as a class action to hold the company accountable for how they treated their
9 employees.

10 4. I chose to pursue this case on a class action basis rather than as an individual
11 claim. In that regard, I understood that I had specific burdens as the “Class Representative,”
12 which included: (a) representing the interests of all class members, (2) considering the interests
13 of all class members above my own personal interests, (3) participating actively in the lawsuit,
14 including potential testimony at deposition and trial, and keeping generally aware of the status
15 and progress of the lawsuit. Moreover, I understood that any resolution of the lawsuit is subject
16 to court approval and must be designed in the best interests of the class as a whole.

17 5. I respectfully request that the Court approve the agreed-upon service award for
18 the following reasons.

19 6. First, I have spent more than 60 hours engaged in activities to benefit the class. I
20 have been an active participant in this litigation, including assisting my attorneys in various ways
21 and making myself available when needed. For example, I have assisted my attorneys by
22 compiling and analyzing substantial documentation regarding claims. I also helped to explain
23 and discuss the company’s practices and their general practices and procedures, locating and
24 analyzing company documents, among others. I also spoke to other employees and discussed the
25 issues and claims of the current lawsuit. I also assisted in settlement discussions, helped obtain a
26 highly favorable result for the class – with an average payment of over \$3,000 per person,
27 reviewed all settlement documents, and continued to talk to other employees throughout this
28 process, and believe that this settlement is fair for the class.

7. Second, I respectfully request that the Court approve the agreed-upon service award because I agreed to set aside my personal interests and to put the interests of the class ahead or on par with my own. In fact, as a condition of this class action settlement, I was required to compromise on and waive all possible individual claims against the company. However, to finalize this settlement, I put the interests of the class ahead of my own and agreed to waive all of my claims against the company.

8. Third, by bringing this case as a class action, I undertook significant risks and stresses at a high emotional cost without any guarantee of success. For example, filing this lawsuit and being a whistle blower was stressful on a day-to-day basis as I have constantly worried about the risk that this case could impact my ability to find future jobs. This stress/risk lasted for the entire case, and I'm worried it will continue to make it hard to find a job in the future since the case information is all available online.

9. Fourth, and finally, bringing this case also came with a major financial risk because, if I lost the case, I would be required to pay the company's costs, and there was a chance they could try to make me pay their attorneys' fees as well.

10. Therefore, I respectfully request that the Court award the service award since that amount is justified based on the substantial time I spent on this case, as well as the risks and stresses I faced and will continue to face to secure this class action settlement to benefit the other employees.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on May 30, 2024, at Covina, California.

By: 
Joel Arellano (May 30, 2024 13:33 PDT)