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Clerk of the Court

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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF MERCED

ISAAC ALVAREZ, individually, and on behalf
of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

VALLEY CONNECTION, LLC DBA CARL'S
JR., a California limited liability company; and
DOES 1 through 10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. 22CV-00985

CLASS ACTION

*[Assigned for all purposes to the Honorable
Brian McCabe, Courtroom 8]*

**~~PROPOSED~~ ORDER GRANTING
PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR
PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS
ACTION SETTLEMENT**

*[Filed with Memorandum of Points and
Authorities and the Declaration of Justin F.
Marquez]*

PRELIMINARY APPROVAL HEARING

Date: November 23, 2022

Time: 8:15 a.m.

Dept: 8

1 The Court has before it Plaintiff Isaac Alvarez’s (“Plaintiff”) Motion for Preliminary
2 Approval of Class Action Settlement. Having reviewed the Motion for Preliminary Approval
3 of Class Action Settlement, the Declaration of Justin F. Marquez, the Stipulation for Class
4 Action Settlement (which is referred to here as the “Settlement Agreement”), and good cause
5 appearing, the Court hereby finds and orders as follows:

6 1. The Court finds on a preliminary basis that the Settlement Agreement appears to
7 be fair, adequate, and reasonable and therefore meets the requirements for preliminary
8 approval. The Court grants preliminary approval of the Settlement and the Settlement Class
9 based upon the terms set forth in the Settlement Agreement between Plaintiff Isaac Alvarez
10 and Defendant Valley Connection, LLC dba Carl’s Jr. (“Defendant”), attached to the
11 Declaration of Justin F. Marquez in Support of Plaintiff’s Motion for Preliminary Approval of
12 Class Action Settlement as **Exhibit 1**.

13 2. The Settlement falls within the range of reasonableness of a settlement which
14 could ultimately be given final approval by this Court, and appears to be presumptively valid,
15 subject only to any objections that may be raised at the Final Approval Hearing and final
16 approval by this Court. The Court notes that Defendant has agreed to create a common fund
17 of \$305,000.00 to cover (a) settlement payments to class members who do not validly opt out;
18 (b) a \$12,700.00 payment to the State of California, Labor & Workforce Development Agency
19 for its share of the settlement of claims for penalties under the Private Attorneys General Act,
20 75% of which (\$9,525.00) will be paid to the LWDA and 25% (\$3,175.00) will be paid to
21 eligible members of the PAGA Class; (c) Class Representative service payment of up to
22 \$8,000 for Plaintiff Isaac Alvarez; (d) Class Counsel’s attorneys’ fees, not to exceed 33-1/3%
23 of the Gross Settlement Amount (\$101,666.67), and up to \$12,500.00 in costs for actual
24 litigation expenses incurred by Class Counsel; and (e) Settlement Administration Costs of up
25 to \$20,000.

26 3. The Court preliminarily finds that the terms of the Settlement appear to be
27 within the range of possible approval, pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure § 382
28 and applicable law. The Court finds on a preliminary basis that: (1) the settlement amount is

1 fair and reasonable to the class members when balanced against the probable outcome of
 2 further litigation relating to class certification, liability and damages issues, and potential
 3 appeals; (2) significant informal discovery, investigation, research, and litigation have been
 4 conducted such that counsel for the parties at this time are able to reasonably evaluate their
 5 respective positions; (3) settlement at this time will avoid substantial costs, delay, and risks
 6 that would be presented by the further prosecution of the litigation; and (4) the proposed
 7 settlement has been reached as the result of intensive, serious, and non-collusive negotiations
 8 between the Parties with the assistance of a well-respected class action mediator. Accordingly,
 9 the Court preliminarily finds that the Settlement Agreement was entered into in good faith.

10 4. A final fairness hearing on the question of whether the proposed settlement,
 11 attorneys' fees and costs to Class Counsel, payment to the State of California, Labor &
 12 Workforce Development Agency for its share of the settlement of claims for penalties under
 13 the Private Attorneys General Act, and the class representative's enhancement award should
 14 be finally approved as fair, reasonable and adequate as to the members of the class is hereby
 15 set in accordance with the Implementation Schedule set forth below.

16 5. The Court provisionally certifies for settlement purposes only the following
 17 class (the "Settlement Class"): "All persons who worked for Defendant in California as an
 18 hourly-paid or non-exempt employee during the Settlement Period of March 30, 2018 through
 19 October 15, 2022, and who have not signed an arbitration agreement with Defendant."

20 6. The Court finds, for settlement purposes only, that the Settlement Class meets
 21 the requirements for certification under California Code of Civil Procedure § 382 in that: (1)
 22 the Settlement Class Members are so numerous that joinder is impractical; (2) there are
 23 questions of law and fact that are common, or of general interest, to all Settlement Class
 24 Members, which predominate over individual issues; (3) Plaintiff's claims are typical of the
 25 claims of the Settlement Class Members; (4) Plaintiff and Class Counsel will fairly and
 26 adequately protect the interests of the Settlement Class Members; and (5) a class action is
 27 superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.

28 7. The Court appoints as Class Representative, for settlement purposes only,

1 Plaintiff Isaac Alvarez. The Court further preliminarily approves Plaintiff’s ability to request
2 an incentive award up to \$8,000.

3 8. The Court appoints, for settlement purposes only, Wilshire Law Firm, PLC as
4 Class Counsel. The Court further preliminarily approves Class Counsel’s ability to request
5 attorneys’ fees of up to one-third of the Total Settlement Amount (\$101,666.67), and costs not
6 to exceed \$12,500.00.

7 9. The Court appoints CPT Group Class Action Administrators as the Settlement
8 Administrator with reasonable administration costs estimated not to exceed \$11,500 if there
9 are 800 class members .

10 10. The Court approves, as to form and content: (1) the Class Notice, attached as
11 Exhibit A to the Settlement Agreement; and (2) the Workweek Dispute Form, attached as
12 Exhibit B to the Settlement Agreement (collectively, “Notice Packets”). The Court finds on a
13 preliminary basis that plan for distribution of the Notice Packets to Settlement Class Members
14 satisfies due process, provides the best notice practicable under the circumstances, and shall
15 constitute due and sufficient notice to all persons entitled thereto.

16 11. The parties are ordered to carry out the Settlement according to the terms of the
17 Settlement Agreement.

18 12. Any class member who does not timely and validly request exclusion from the
19 settlement may object to the Settlement Agreement.

20 13. The Court orders the following Implementation Schedule:

21

22 Defendant to provide Class List to the	December 23, 2022 (30 calendar days after
23 Settlement Administrator	Court’s Preliminary Approval Order)
24 Settlement Administrator to mail the Notice	January 9, 2023 (40 days after Court’s
25 Packets	Preliminary Approval Order)
26 Response Deadline	March 13, 2023 (45 calendar days after
27	mailing the Notice Packets)
28	

Deadline to Respond to Objections	5 calendar days after receipt by Settlement Administrator of Dispute Form
Deadline for Administrator to Submit Report	21 days before Final Approval Hearing
Final Approval Hearing	April 27, 2023, at 8:15 a.m.

14. The Court further ORDERS that, pending further order of this Court, all proceedings in this lawsuit, except those contemplated herein and in the settlement, are stayed.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATE: 11/30/2022

Donald J. Proietti

Hon. ~~Bryan McCabe~~ Donald Proietti
Merced County Superior Court

Alvarez v. Valley Connection, LLC dba Carl's Jr., et al.
22CV-00985

[illegible]

I, Ashley Narinyans, state that I am employed in the aforesaid County, State of California; I am over the age of eighteen years and not a party to the within action; my business address is 3055 Wilshire Blvd., 12th Floor, Los Angeles, California 90010. My electronic service address is anarinyans@wilshirelawfirm.com.

On October 31, 2022, I served the foregoing **[PROPOSED] ORDER GRANTING PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT** on the interested parties by placing a true copy thereof, enclosed in a sealed envelope by following one of the methods of service as follows:

Jacqueline Beaumont (SBN 253776)

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L. Lisa Sandoval (SBN 310380)

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Attorneys for Defendant

(X) **BY UPLOAD:** I hereby certify that the documents were uploaded by my office to the State of California Labor and Workforce Development Agency Online Filing Site.

(X) **BY E-MAIL:** I hereby certify that this document was served from Los Angeles, California, by e-mail delivery on the parties listed herein at their most recent known email address or e-mail of record in this action.

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

Executed on October 31, 2022, at Los Angeles, California.


Ashley Narinyans