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Attorneys for Plaintiff Michael Bravo and the Class

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA**

MICHAEL BRAVO, individually and on behalf
of others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

MICHELS PACIFIC ENERGY, INC., a
Delaware corporation; and DOES 1 through 25,
inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. 22CV403427

Honorable Theodore C. Zayner
Department 19

**DECLARATION OF JONATHAN M.
GENISH IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFF'S
MOTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF
CLASS ACTION AND PAGA
SETTLEMENT, ATTORNEYS' FEES AND
COSTS, ENHANCEMENT PAYMENT,
AND SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION
COSTS**

Date: September 25, 2024
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Dept.: 19

Complaint Filed: September 26, 2022
FAC Filed: November 28, 2022
Trial Date: Not Set

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1. I am an attorney duly licensed to practice law in all Courts of the State of California. I am a shareholder and the founder of Blackstone Law, APC, attorneys of record for Plaintiff Michael Bravo (“Plaintiff”). I have personal knowledge of the facts contained herein, and, if called to testify, I could and would competently do so.

2. I am fully familiar with the legal and factual issues in this case and have specific experience litigating complex wage and hour actions as class actions, including employment cases as set forth above.

4. On the vast majority of those cases, I was the only or primary attorney managing the case and thus obtained extensive experience. In that capacity, I conducted wage and hour and wrongful termination labor and employment intakes; was the primary contact for all clients; took and defended hundreds (if not thousands) of depositions; propounded and responded to all discovery; prepared and opposed all motions and pleadings, including dispositive and certification motions; strategized on all cases; attended all hearings; attended all mediations; coordinated with class action administrators; prepared and worked with experts; first and second chaired multiple trials and arbitrations; and engaged in all other intricate facets of litigation. During that time, I represented a wide range of clients from sole proprietorships to Fortune 500 companies in state, federal, complex, and appellate courts. Many of the cases I managed were highly publicized, with articles written about them in the Los

1 Angeles Times, Deadline, The Hollywood Reporter, Business Insider, Law360, and others. Super
2 Lawyers has regularly honored me as a Southern California Rising Star since 2012.

3 5. In February 2018, I started the law firm of Blackstone Law, APC, representing
4 plaintiffs in individual and representative employment litigation. The firm has grown exponentially
5 over the past six-plus years, now maintaining twenty highly pedigreed attorneys working on almost
6 exclusively labor and employment class actions, California Labor Code Private Attorney General Act
7 of 2004 (“PAGA”) cases, and individual matters, with roughly 15% of the firm focused on other
8 complex general litigation matters.

9 6. I have considerable experience in handling class and representative action lawsuits
10 throughout my career and have been approved as counsel in a number of cases, including, most
11 recently:

- 12 • *Anthony DiRico v. Seek Capital, LLC*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No.
13 BC698076, a wage and hour class action brought on behalf of a class of hourly-paid
14 employees working in the State of California.
- 15 • *Consumer Protection Group, LLC v. A. D. Sutton & Sons, Inc.*, Los Angeles County
16 Superior Court, Case No. 19STCV29979, a private attorney general action for penalties
17 pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7.
- 18 • *Consumer Protection Group, LLC v. Shaxon Industries, Inc., et al.*, Los Angeles County
19 Superior Court, Case No. 19STCV30306, a private attorney general action for penalties
20 pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7.
- 21 • *Consumer Protection Group, LLC v. Home Depot U.S.A., Inc.*, Los Angeles County
22 Superior Court, Case No. 19STCV30445, a private attorney general action for penalties
23 pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 25249.7.
- 24 • *Eric Savoy v. Collector’s Universe, Inc., et al.*, Central District Court of California, Case
25 No.: 8:20-cv-00632-DOC-ADS (recently remanded to Orange County Superior Court,
26 Case No. 30-2020-01130892-CU-RI-CXC), a consumer fraud class action.

27 7. Blackstone Law, APC has been counsel of record on several class action and PAGA
28 actions that have since been resolved, the most recent of which are as follows:

- *David Williams v. Rancho Nicasio, LLC*, Marin County Superior Court, Case No. CIV2203067, approved as class counsel in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Bobby Birdi v. Lucid USA, Inc.*, Alameda County Superior Court, Case No. 21CV003541, approved as class counsel in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Alexis Cardoza v. BHFC Operating LLC*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 21STCV34040, approved as counsel in settlement of representative wage and hour action pursuant to PAGA.
- *Theresa Bendorf, et al. v. Sea World LLC, et al.*, San Diego County Superior Court, Case No. 37-2021-00034922-CU-OE-CTL, preliminarily approved as class counsel, in association with other counsel, in settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Victor De La Cruz v. Northwest Pipe Company*, San Bernardino County Superior Court, Case No. CIVSB2211140, preliminarily approved as class counsel in settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Maria Ayala, et al. v. SDH Services West, LLC*, Kern County Superior Court, Case No. BCV-21-101933, approved as class counsel in final settlement of wage and hour class action.
- *Alfredo Sanchez v. Greenworld, Inc.*, Riverside County Superior Court, Case No. CVRI2105756, approved as class counsel in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Oscar Bryant v. Midwest Construction Services, Inc. dba Trillium*, San Bernardino County Superior Court, Case No. CIVSB2121529, approved as class counsel in final settlement of wage and hour class action.
- *Matthew Savattieri v. AMI Expeditionary Healthcare, LLC, et al.*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 21STCV33372, approved as class counsel in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.

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- *Lexy Barajas, et al. v. H. W. Hunter, Inc.*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 22STCV01892, approved as counsel in settlement of representative wage and hour action pursuant to PAGA.
- *Alejandro Valdez v. C.H.I. Automart, Inc.*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 21STCV40168, approved as class counsel in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Sheizan Bawa v. Meathead Movers, Inc.*, Orange County Superior Court, Case No. 30-2021-01211895-CU-OE-CXC, approved as counsel in settlement of representative wage and hour action pursuant to PAGA.
- *Tanisha Lopez, et al. v. Restorix Health, Inc.*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 21STCV33067, approved as class counsel, in association with other counsel, in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Perla Soto, et al. v. Nippon Express U.S.A., Inc.*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 21STCV24902, approved as class counsel in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Angel Garcia, et al. v. J&B Investments, Inc., et al.*, San Bernardino County Superior Court, Case No. CIVSB2208601, approved as class counsel, in association with other counsel, in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Sindy Aviles, et al. v. Freeway Insurance Services America, LLC*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 21STCV34864, approved as counsel, in association with other counsel, in settlement of representative wage and hour action pursuant to PAGA.
- *Alexander Gnaedig, et al. v. Favorite Healthcare Staffing, Inc.*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 21STCV20904, approved as class counsel, in association with other counsel, in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Richard Evans v. My Paint Stop, LLC, et al.*, Contra Costa County Superior Court, Case No. MSC21-01812, approved as class counsel in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.

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- *Jose Luis Parada George v. Main Electric Supply Company, LLC, et al.*, Orange County Superior Court, Case No. 30-2021-01220136-CU-OE-CXC, approved as counsel in settlement of representative wage and hour action pursuant to PAGA.
- *Samia Salazar Yunis v. Sharif Jewelers*, Sacramento County Superior Court, Case No. 34-2020-00290080, approved as class counsel in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Daniel Analco v. Felix Chevrolet, LP, et al.*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 21STCV36654, approved as class counsel in final settlement of wage and hour class and PAGA action.
- *Sasha Aiono v. Benefit Cosmetics*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 21STCV33719, approved as counsel in settlement of representative wage and hour action pursuant to PAGA.

8. I am currently the managing partner overseeing roughly 500 labor and employment cases, approximately 80% of which include a wage and hour component. The majority of those cases are wage-and-hour putative class actions or representative PAGA actions seeking relief on behalf of thousands of California employees.

Procedural History of the Action

9. On September 22, 2022, Plaintiff provided written notice to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) by online submission and to Defendant Michels Pacific Energy, Inc. (“Defendant”) by U.S. Certified Mail, pursuant to California Labor Code Section 2699.3, of the specified provisions of the California Labor Code alleged to have been violated by Defendant (“PAGA Letter”).

10. On September 26, 2022, Plaintiff filed a Class Action Complaint for Damages in the action entitled *Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.*, Santa Clara County Superior Court Case No. 22CV403427 (“Action”), thereby commencing a putative class action against Defendant. On November 28, 2022, Plaintiff filed a First Amended Class Action Complaint for Damages and Enforcement Action Under the Private Attorneys General Act, California Labor Code §§ 2698 Et Seq. (“Operative Complaint”) in the Action, which added a cause of action under PAGA. The Operative

1 Complaint alleges nine (9) causes of action for violations of the California Labor Code for failure to
2 pay overtime wages, failure to provide compliant meal periods and premium payments in lieu thereof,
3 failure to provide compliant rest periods and premiums payments in lieu thereof, failure to pay
4 minimum wages, failure to timely pay wages upon termination, failure to provide accurate wage
5 statements, and failure to reimburse necessary business expenses, for violations of California Business
6 & Professions Code Section 17200, *et seq.* based on the aforementioned California Labor Code
7 violations, and for civil penalties under PAGA based on the aforementioned California Labor Code
8 violations.

9 11. Following the filing of the Operative Complaint, Plaintiff and Defendant (collectively,
10 the “Parties”) met and conferred with respect to the potential resolution of the Action by means of a
11 private mediation and agreed to exchange informal discovery as part of that process. Pursuant to the
12 Parties’ decision to mediate, Defendant produced a random sampling of putative class members’ time
13 and pay records, as well as information and documents concerning the claims set forth in Plaintiff’s
14 Operative Complaint, such as Defendant’s employee handbooks, collective bargaining agreements,
15 relevant wage and hour policies, and information regarding the total number of putative class
16 members, the number of current versus former employees, the total workweeks worked by the putative
17 class members, the dates of employment of the putative class members, and the average rate of pay
18 for the putative class members.

19 12. On July 13, 2023, after a thorough investigation and analysis of these documents and
20 data, the Parties attended a formal mediation with Louis Marlin, Esq. (“Mediator”), a neutral and
21 respected mediator with extensive experience in complex wage and hour matters. At the mediation,
22 the Parties engaged in intensive settlement discussions during which they debated their respective
23 positions and exchanged views regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the alleged claims. After a
24 full day of mediation, and with the help of the Mediator, the Parties were able to reach an agreement
25 to resolve this dispute on a class and representative basis. Following the mediation, the Parties worked
26 diligently to negotiate and memorialize the terms in a long form settlement agreement.

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13. On September 19, 2023, the Parties executed the Joint Stipulation of Class Action and PAGA Settlement (“Original Agreement”). A true and correct copy of the Original Agreement is attached as **Exhibit 1** hereto.

14. On November 3, 2023, Plaintiff filed a Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement (“Motion for Preliminary Approval”) and supporting documents seeking approval of the settlement reached between the Parties. On February 27, 2024, the Court issued a tentative ruling (“February 27, 2024 Tentative Ruling”) in which it raised several points of inquiry with regards to the Motion for Preliminary Approval. On February 28, 2024, counsel for Plaintiff appeared for the hearing on the Motion for Preliminary Approval to seek clarification on the points of inquiry in the February 27, 2024 Tentative Ruling. The Court continued the hearing on the Motion for Preliminary Approval to March 27, 2024 at 1:30 p.m., and Plaintiff was ordered to file a supplemental declaration no later than March 15, 2024.

15. On March 11, 2024, pursuant to the Court’s direction, the Parties executed Amendment No. 1 to Joint Stipulation of Class Action and PAGA Settlement (“Amendment No. 1”) (together, the Original Agreement and Amendment No. 1 are referred to as the “Settlement” or “Settlement Agreement”), which changed the *cy pres* to California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc., and revised the Notice of Class Action Settlement (“Class Notice”). A true and correct copy of Amendment No. 1 is attached as **Exhibit 2** hereto.

16. On March 15, 2024, Plaintiff filed a supplemental declaration that addressed the Court’s points of inquiry in the February 27, 2024 Tentative Ruling (“March 15, 2024 Supplemental Declaration”). On April 29, 2024, the Court entered the Order Re: Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class and Representative Action Settlement (“Preliminary Approval Order”), thereby preliminarily approving the terms of the Settlement Agreement and the Class Notice. A true and correct copy of the Preliminary Approval Order is attached hereto as **Exhibit 3**.

Summary of the Terms of the Settlement Agreement

17. By way of the Preliminary Approval Order, the Court certified the following Class for settlement purposes only: “All current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union employees and union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by

Defendant in the State of California at any time during the Class Period” (“Class” or “Class Members”). The “Class Period” is defined as the period from September 26, 2018 through October 11, 2023. The “National Pipe Line Agreements” is defined as the Collective Bargaining Agreements (“CBAs”) that cover Defendant’s employees who are members of the International Union of Operating Engineers (“IUOE”), the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (“IBT”), and the Laborers’ International Union of North America (“LIUNA”). The “Settlement Class Members” consist of all Class Members who did not submit a timely and valid Request for Exclusion. The “PAGA Employees” consist of “all current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union and union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the PAGA Period.” The “PAGA Period” is defined as the period from September 22, 2021 through October 11, 2023.

18. As explained in the March 15, 2024 Supplemental Declaration, the Class encompasses two groups:

- a. All current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union employees employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the Class Period; and
- b. All current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the Class Period.

19. Similarly, the PAGA Employees also encompasses two similarly defined groups:

- a. All current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union employees employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the PAGA Period; and
- b. All current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the PAGA Period.

20. For clarity, the phrase, “covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements” is a qualifier for “union employees,” not for “non-union employees.” Accordingly, the “non-union employees” and the “union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements” are different groups of employees.

1 21. Based on the data provided by Defendant following preliminary approval and for
2 purposes of administration of the Class Notice, I am informed that there are 300 Settlement Class
3 Members who were employed by Defendant for 13,396 weeks as hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-
4 union or union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements in California during the
5 Class Period (“Workweeks”) and 254 PAGA Employees who were employed by Defendant for 10,316
6 weeks as hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union or union employees covered under the National
7 Pipe Line Agreements in California during the PAGA Period (“PAGA Workweeks”).

8 22. The Parties have agreed to settle the Class and PAGA claims at issue in the Action for
9 a non-reversionary Gross Settlement Amount of One Million Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars
10 and Zero Cents (\$1,750,000.00), which is exclusive of employer-side payroll taxes. The Gross
11 Settlement Amount includes: (1) Class Counsel’s fees in the amount of one-third (1/3) of the Gross
12 Settlement Amount, equaling Five Hundred Eighty-Three Thousand Three Hundred Thirty-Three
13 Dollars and Thirty-Three Cents (\$583,333.33); (2) Class Counsel’s actual litigation costs and
14 expenses, in the amount of Thirteen Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$13,000.00); (3) Settlement
15 Administration Costs in the amount of Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents
16 (\$8,500.00); (4) Enhancement Payment in the amount of Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and
17 Zero Cents (\$7,500.00); and (5) PAGA Amount in the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars and
18 Zero Cents (\$200,000.00). After the above Court-approved amounts are deducted from the Gross
19 Settlement Amount, the Settlement Class Members will share in a Net Settlement Amount of
20 approximately Nine Hundred Thirty-Seven Thousand Six Hundred Sixty-Six Dollars and Sixty-Seven
21 Cents (\$937,666.67).

22 23. The Settlement does not require Settlement Class Members to submit claims as a
23 prerequisite to receiving their *pro rata* share of the Net Settlement Amount (“Individual Settlement
24 Share”) nor does it require PAGA Employees to submit claims as a prerequisite to receiving their *pro*
25 *rata* share of twenty-five percent (25%) of the PAGA Amount (“Individual PAGA Payment”).
26 Individual Settlement Shares are calculated by the Settlement Administrator by dividing the Net
27 Settlement Amount by the Workweeks of all Settlement Class Members to yield the “Final Workweek
28 Value,” and multiplying each Settlement Class Member’s individual Workweeks by the Final

1 Workweek Value. Individual PAGA Payments are calculated by the Settlement Administrator by
2 dividing twenty-five percent (25%) of the PAGA Amount (\$50,000.00) (“PAGA Employee Amount”)
3 by the PAGA Workweeks of all PAGA Employees to yield the “PAGA Workweek Value,” and
4 multiplying each PAGA Employee’s individual PAGA Workweeks by the PAGA Workweek Value.

5 24. I am aware from my review of the information provided by the Settlement
6 Administrator that the estimated average gross Individual Settlement Share is \$3,125.56, the estimated
7 highest gross Individual Settlement Share is \$14,279.19, and the estimated lowest gross Individual
8 Settlement Share is \$70.00; the estimated average Individual PAGA Payment is \$196.85, the estimated
9 highest Individual PAGA Payment is \$523.46, and the estimated lowest Individual PAGA Payment is
10 \$4.85.

11 25. Each Individual Settlement Share will be allocated as twenty percent (20%) wages and
12 eighty percent (80%) penalties, interest, and non-wage damages. The portion allocated to wages will
13 be reported on an IRS Form W-2 and the portions allocated to penalties, interest, and non-wage
14 damages will be reported on an IRS Form 1099 (if applicable) by the Settlement Administrator. The
15 Settlement Administrator will withhold the employee’s share of taxes and withholdings with respect
16 to the wages portion of the Individual Settlement Shares, and issue checks to Settlement Class
17 Members for their net payment of their Individual Settlement Share (“Individual Settlement
18 Payment”). The employer’s share of taxes and contributions in connection with the wages portion of
19 Individual Settlement Shares will be paid separately and in addition to the Gross Settlement Amount.
20 Each Individual PAGA Payment will be allocated as one hundred percent (100%) penalties and will
21 be reported on an IRS Form 1099 (if applicable) by the Settlement Administrator.

22 26. Each Individual Settlement Payment and Individual PAGA Payment check will be
23 valid and negotiable for one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days from the date the checks are
24 issued, and thereafter, shall be canceled. Any funds associated with such canceled checks will be
25 distributed by the Settlement Administrator to California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (the *cy pres*
26 recipient) in accordance with California Code of Civil Procedure Section 384.

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1 **Notice to the LWDA**

2 27. On November 3, 2023, Class Counsel submitted a copy of the Original Agreement, and
3 on March 15, 2024, submitted a copy of Amendment No. 1, to the LWDA through its online
4 submission portal in compliance with California Labor Code § 2699(1)(2). The LWDA has not
5 objected or otherwise responded to the submissions.

6 **The Settlement Is Fair and Reasonable**

7 ***Discovery and Informed Arms-Length Negotiations***

8 28. The Parties' settlement negotiations were at all times made at arm's-length and were
9 adversarial. The settlement was reached following a full day of mediation with a highly respected
10 mediator with substantial experience mediating wage and hour cases, and Plaintiff engaged in
11 additional negotiations in order to finalize the long-form agreement presently before the Court.

12 29. The Parties engaged in extensive informal discovery prior to reaching a settlement.
13 Prior to mediation, Defendant produced a random sampling of putative class members' time and pay
14 records, employee handbooks, CBAs, relevant wage and hour policies, and information regarding the
15 total number of putative class members, the number of current versus former employees, the total
16 workweeks worked by the putative class members, the dates of employment of the putative class
17 members, and the average rate of pay for the putative class members. This allowed Class Counsel to
18 conduct an informed assessment and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the claims and the
19 potential class-wide damages. Counsel for both Parties put a lot of time and effort into informal
20 discovery to determine the merits of the case. Specifically, there were eight different CBAs covering
21 different sets of employees, and based thereon, the Parties analyzed each agreement to determine
22 which claim each CBA covered and did not cover and which employees each CBA covered and did
23 not cover. This negotiation process ultimately allowed the Parties to determine which employees had
24 viable claims to negotiate for settlement purposes. Based on the information exchanged, the Parties
25 extensively briefed issues regarding class certification and liability and provided their analyses to the
26 Mediator who helped the Parties debate the strengths and weakness of their respective positions.

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1 30. At all times, Plaintiff was willing and prepared to litigate this matter through class
2 certification and trial if the Parties had been unable to reach a favorable resolution. Additionally,
3 settlement negotiations were conducted by highly capable and experienced counsel. Class Counsel
4 are respected members of the California State Bar with strong records of vigorous and effective
5 advocacy and are experienced in handling complex wage and hour class action litigation. Accordingly,
6 Class Counsel had sufficient information and experience to act intelligently in negotiating the
7 Settlement.

8 31. Although the investigation and information discovered supports Plaintiff's contentions,
9 Defendant raised potential defenses and other circumstances that impacted the risk of proceeding on
10 a class-wide basis. Consideration of these risks factored into the decision to enter the Settlement.

11 32. My colleagues and I were aware of Defendant's defenses and arguments and have also
12 taken into account the uncertainty and risk of the outcome of further litigation, and the difficulties and
13 delays inherent in such litigation, including those involved in class and/or representative adjudication.
14 Plaintiff further recognizes the burdens of proof necessary to establish liability for the claims asserted
15 in the Action, Defendant's defenses, and the difficulties in establishing entitlement to monetary
16 recovery. Plaintiff has also considered the Parties' settlement discussions, as well as the evaluations
17 of the Mediator, who is experienced and well-regarded in complex labor and employment matters.

18 33. Defendant denied and continues to deny any liability and wrongdoing of any kind
19 associated with the claims alleged in the Action, and further denies that class certification is
20 appropriate for any purpose other than the Settlement. Defendant believes that it would ultimately
21 prevail in the Action. Defendant proffered defenses to both certification and to the merits of Plaintiff's
22 claims. In addition to maintaining it complied with all relevant wage-and-hour laws throughout the
23 relevant time period, Defendant contended that Plaintiff's claims are not suitable for class certification
24 because individual issues would predominate should this case go to trial. As with all class actions,
25 these complex cases raise difficult management and proof issues and, accordingly, there is a significant
26 risk that the Court may deny class certification.

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1 34. My office also recognized that, even if Plaintiff prevailed at class certification, proving
2 the amount of wages due to each Class Member would be an expensive, time-consuming, and
3 extremely uncertain proposition. In order to prove liability and damages, my office would need to
4 request and analyze thousands of pages of documents, obtain the Class Members' contact information,
5 contact them, and obtain declarations. Obtaining the cooperation of current employees would also be
6 difficult, given the likely reluctance to aid prosecution of a lawsuit against a current employer. On the
7 other hand, Defendant would likely be able to obtain the cooperation of their employees. Moreover,
8 even if Plaintiff prevailed at class certification and trial, possible appeals would substantially delay
9 any recovery by the Class.

10 35. Therefore, I submit that the Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate. The
11 Settlement is in the best interest of the Class Members, the PAGA Employees, and the State of
12 California, and is within the accepted range of recoveries for this type of litigation given the inherent
13 risk of litigation, the risk of obtaining and maintaining class certification, and the costs of further
14 litigation.

15 ***Attorneys' Fees and Costs***

16 36. Class Counsel seeks one-third (1/3) of the Gross Settlement Amount (i.e., \$583,333.33)
17 for fees for the time spent litigating this matter and reimbursement of actual costs and expenses totaling
18 Thirteen Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$13,000.00) incurred in the prosecution of the Action.
19 Attached hereto as **Exhibit 4** is a true and correct list of the litigation costs and expenses incurred by
20 my firm. The requested fees and costs are fair compensation for undertaking complex, risky,
21 expensive, and time-consuming litigation on a contingent fee basis, especially in light of the
22 substantial benefits achieved by Class Counsel for the Class Members. Class Counsel's requested fee
23 award is summarily addressed as follows but is more fully discussed in Plaintiff's Motion for Final
24 Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement, Attorneys' Fees and Costs, Enhancement Payment,
25 and Settlement Administration Costs ("Motion for Final Approval") and the Declaration of Miriam L.
26 Schimmel filed concurrently herewith.

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1 37. The effectiveness of Blackstone Law, APC's prosecution of this matter has translated
2 into tangible monetary benefits for the Settlement Class Members as follows: (1) Settlement Class
3 Members will obtain monetary recovery over a relatively short period of time, as opposed to waiting
4 additional years for the same, or potentially worse, result; (2) a guaranteed result that compares
5 favorably with other similar class action settlements of this type, given the strengths and weaknesses
6 of the Action; and (3) significant savings in Class Counsel's fees and/or costs that would have only
7 increased significantly had the Action progressed through trial and/or appeals.

8 38. Class Counsel has litigated this matter for over a year and was prepared to continue
9 litigating this matter through class certification and trial. Plaintiff's Motion for Final Approval and
10 the Declaration of Miriam L. Schimmel elaborates on the nature of the legal services provided, the
11 time incurred in performing those services, and Class Counsel's hourly rates. The requested award of
12 fees and costs was included and set forth clearly in the Class Notice provided to the Class Members.

13 ***Enhancement Payment***

14 39. Pursuant to the Preliminary Approval Order, the Court has approved an Enhancement
15 Payment to Plaintiff in the amount of Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents
16 (\$7,500.00). The requested Enhancement Payment is eminently reasonable given the time and effort
17 Plaintiff spent on this matter, and the benefit to the other Class Members as a result of Plaintiff's
18 actions. Enhancement awards in wage and hour cases typically range from \$5,000.00 to \$20,000.00,
19 although some awards are higher. The Declaration of Plaintiff Michael Bravo submitted herewith
20 details his work and efforts in bringing and litigating this matter through resolution and supports the
21 requested Enhancement Payment. The Enhancement Payment was also disclosed in the Class Notice
22 provided to the Class Members.

23 ***Settlement Administration Costs***

24 40. In Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Approval, Plaintiff requested, and the Court
25 preliminarily approved, the Settlement Administration Costs not to exceed Eight Thousand Five
26 Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$8,500.00). ILYM Group, Inc., the approved Settlement
27 Administrator, provided my firm with its quote stating that its cost to administer the Settlement is
28 indeed Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$8,500.00).

Allocation to the LWDA

41. As part of the Settlement Agreement, Defendant has agreed to pay Two Hundred Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$200,000.00) to settle the claims of the PAGA Employees brought pursuant to PAGA, of which the payment of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$150,000.00) (75% of the PAGA Amount) will be paid to the LDWA for education and enforcement purposes.

42. It is extremely common in approved wage and hour class action cases that settle that only a small portion of the total settlement is paid to PAGA penalties “in order to maximize payments to class members.” (*Magadia v. Wal-Mart Assocs.* (N.D. Cal. May 31, 2019, No. 17-CV-00062-LHK) 2019 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 91732, *90-91, citing as examples *Ceja-Corona v. CVS Pharm., Inc.* (E.D. Cal. Jan. 14, 2015) 2015 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 5118, 2015 WL 222500, at *2-3 [preliminarily approving \$10,000 in PAGA penalties out of a total settlement amount of \$900,000]; *Thio v. Genji, LLC* (N.D. Cal. 2014) 14 F. Supp. 3d 1324, 1330 [preliminarily approving \$10,000 in PAGA penalties out of a total settlement amount of \$1,250,000]; *Franco v. Ruiz Food Prods.* (E.D. Cal. Nov. 27, 2012) 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 169057, 2012 WL 5941801, at *14 [granting final approval of \$10,000 in PAGA penalties out of a total settlement amount of \$2,500,000]; *Garcia v. Gordon Trucking, Inc.* (E.D. Cal. Oct. 31, 2012) 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 160052, 2012 WL 5364575, at *3 [granting final approval of \$10,000 in PAGA penalties out of a total settlement amount of \$3,700,000]; *Chu v. Wells Fargo Invs., LLC* (N.D. Cal. Feb. 16, 2011) 2011 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 15821, 2011 WL 672645, at *1 [granting final approval of \$10,000 in PAGA penalties out of a total settlement amount of \$6,900,000].) Like here, in these approved settlements, the parties generally maximized statutory penalties and minimized PAGA penalties to focus on claims to the class members, the persons who actually suffered the California Labor Code violations.

Notice to the Class

43. The Class Notice approved by the Court met the requirements for proper notice of settlement to a class: it identified the Parties and described the Action, the Class, the Gross Settlement Amount, the proposed method for distribution of the Gross Settlement Amount, the amounts proposed to be paid as the Enhancement Payment to Plaintiff, the Settlement Administration Costs to the

1 Settlement Administrator, and the Attorneys' Fees and Costs to Class Counsel. The Class Notice
2 described the proposed Settlement with enough specificity to allow each Class Member to make an
3 informed choice whether to accept and participate in it. It also explained how and when Class
4 Members may object to or opt out of the Class Settlement. Finally, the Class Notice provided the date
5 and time of the hearing on final approval of the Settlement and informed Class Members how to obtain
6 additional information about the Settlement.

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

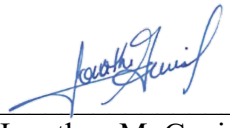
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EXHIBIT 1

JOINT STIPULATION OF CLASS ACTION AND PAGA SETTLEMENT

This Joint Stipulation of Class Action and PAGA Settlement (“Settlement,” “Agreement,” or “Settlement Agreement”) is made and entered into by and between Plaintiff Michael Bravo (“Plaintiff” or “Class Representative”), individually, and on behalf of a class of others similarly situated and on behalf of the State of California with respect to aggrieved employees, and Defendant Michels Pacific Energy, Inc. (“Defendant”) (together, Plaintiff and Defendant are referred to as “Parties” and individually as “Party”).

This Settlement Agreement shall be binding on Plaintiff, Settlement Class Members (as defined herein), the State of California as to the employment of PAGA Employees (as defined herein), and Defendant, subject to the terms and conditions hereof and the approval of the Court.

RECITALS

1. On September 22, 2022, Plaintiff provided written notice to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) by online submission and to Defendant by U.S. Certified Mail, pursuant to California Labor Code Section 2699.3, of the specific provisions of the California Labor Code alleged to have been violated by Defendant (“PAGA Letter”). On September 26, 2022, Plaintiff filed a Class Action Complaint for Damages in the action titled *Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.*, Santa Clara County Superior Court Case No. 22CV403427 (“Action”), thereby commencing a putative class action against Defendant. On November 28, 2022, Plaintiff filed a First Amended Class Action Complaint for Damages and Enforcement Action Under the Private Attorneys General Act, California Labor Code §§ 2698 Et Seq. (“Operative Complaint”) in the Action, which added a cause of action under the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 pursuant to California Labor Code Section 2698 *et seq.* (“PAGA”). The Operative Complaint alleges nine (9) causes of action for violations of the California Labor Code for failure to pay overtime wages, failure to provide compliant meal periods and premium payments in lieu thereof, failure to provide compliant rest periods and premiums payments in lieu thereof, failure to pay minimum wages, failure to timely pay wages upon termination, failure to provide accurate wage statements, and failure to reimburse necessary business expenses, for violations of California Business & Professions Code Section 17200, *et seq.* based on the aforementioned California Labor Code violations, and for civil penalties under PAGA based on

1 the aforementioned California Labor Code violations.

2 2. Defendant denies all materials allegations set forth in the Action and has asserted
3 numerous affirmative defenses. Notwithstanding, in the interest of avoiding further litigation,
4 Defendant desires to fully and finally settle the Action, Released Class Claims (as defined herein), and
5 Released PAGA Claims (as defined herein).

6 3. Class Counsel diligently investigated the class and PAGA claims against Defendant,
7 including any and all applicable defenses and the applicable law. The investigation included, *inter*
8 *alia*, the exchange of information, data, and documents, and review of corporate policies and practices,
9 as well as collective bargaining agreements. The Parties have engaged in sufficient informal discovery
10 and investigation to assess the relative merits of the claims and contentions of the Parties.

11 4. On July 13, 2023, the Parties participated in mediation with Louis Marlin, Esq. (the
12 “Mediator”), a respected mediator of complex wage and hour actions, and with the assistance of the
13 Mediator’s evaluations, the Parties reached the settlement that is memorialized herein. The Parties’
14 settlement discussions were conducted at arms’ length, and the Settlement is the result of an informed
15 and detailed analysis of Defendant’s potential liability and exposure in relation to the costs and risks
16 associated with continued litigation. Based on Class Counsel’s investigation and evaluation, Class
17 Counsel believes that the settlement with Defendant for the consideration and on the terms set forth in
18 this Settlement Agreement is fair, reasonable, and adequate and is in the best interest of the Class
19 Members, State of California, and PAGA Employees in light of all known facts and circumstances,
20 including the risk of significant delay and uncertainty associated with litigation and various defenses
21 asserted by Defendant.

22 5. The Parties expressly acknowledge that this Settlement Agreement is entered into
23 solely for the purpose of compromising significantly disputed claims and that nothing herein is an
24 admission of liability or wrongdoing by Defendant. If for any reason this Settlement Agreement is
25 not approved, it will be of no force or effect, and the Parties shall be returned to their original respective
26 positions.

27 ///

28 ///

DEFINITIONS

6. The following definitions are applicable to this Settlement Agreement. Definitions contained elsewhere in this Settlement Agreement will also be effective.

a. “Attorneys’ Fees and Costs” means attorneys’ fees approved by the Court for Class Counsel’s litigation and resolution of the Action and all actual costs and expenses incurred and to be incurred by Class Counsel in connection with the Action, as set forth in Paragraph 9.

b. “Class” or “Class Member(s)” means all current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union employees and union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the Class Period.

c. “Class Counsel” means Jonathan M. Genish, Miriam L. Schimmel, Joana Fang, and Alexandra Rose of Blackstone Law, APC, who will seek to be appointed counsel for the Class.

d. “Class List” means a complete list of all Class Members that Defendant will diligently and in good faith compile from its records and provide to the Settlement Administrator. The Class List will be formatted in a readable Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet containing the following information for each Class Member: (1) full name; (2) last known mailing address; (3) Social Security number; (4) dates employed by Defendant during the Class Period and PAGA Period (if applicable); and (8) such other information as is necessary for the Settlement Administrator to calculate Workweeks (as defined below) and PAGA Workweeks (as defined below).

e. “Class Notice” means the Notice of Class Action Settlement, substantially in the form attached hereto as “**Exhibit A**.”

f. “Class Period” means the period from September 26, 2018 through October 11, 2023 or the date on which the Court grants preliminary approval of the Settlement, whichever is earlier.

g. “Class Settlement” means the settlement and resolution of all Released Class Claims.

h. “Court” means the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Santa Clara.

i. “Defendant’s Counsel” means Robert E. Dunn of Eimer Stahl LLP.

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j. “Effective Date” means the date when all of the following events have occurred:
(1) the Settlement Agreement has been executed by all Parties, Class Counsel, and Defendant’s Counsel; (2) the Court has given preliminary approval to the Settlement; (3) the Class Notice has been mailed to the Class Members, providing them with an opportunity to object to the terms of the Class Settlement or opt out of the Class Settlement; (4) the Court has had a Final Approval Hearing and entered a Final Approval Order and Judgment; (5) sixty-five calendar days have passed since the Court entered a Final Approval Order and Judgment; and (6) in the event there are written objections to the Class Settlement filed prior to the Final Approval Hearing which are not later withdrawn or denied, the later of the following events: five business days after the period for filing any appeal, writ, or other appellate proceeding opposing the Court’s Final Approval Order and Judgment has elapsed without any appeal, writ, or other appellate proceeding having been filed, or, if any appeal, writ, or other appellate proceeding opposing the Court’s Final Approval Order and Judgment has been filed, five business days after any appeal, writ, or other appellate proceedings opposing the Court’s Final Approval Order and Judgment has finally and conclusively dismissed with no right to pursue further remedies or relief.

k. “Employer Taxes” means the employer’s share of taxes and contributions in connection with the wages portion of Individual Settlement Shares, which shall be paid by Defendant in addition to the Gross Settlement Amount.

l. “Enhancement Payment” means the amount to be paid to Plaintiff, in recognition of his effort and work in prosecuting the Action on behalf of Class Members and PAGA Employees, and general release of claims, as set forth in Paragraph 10.

m. “Final Approval” means the determination by the Court that the Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate, and entry of the Final Approval Order and Judgment based thereon.

n. “Final Approval Hearing” means the hearing at which the Court will consider and determine whether the Settlement should be granted Final Approval.

o. “Final Approval Order and Judgment” means the order granting final approval of the Settlement and entering judgment thereon, in a form and content mutually agreed to by the Parties, and subject to approval by the Court.

p. “Gross Settlement Amount” means the amount of One Million Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$1,750,000.00) to be paid by Defendant in full satisfaction of the Action, Released Class Claims, and Released PAGA Claims, which includes all Attorneys’ Fees and Costs, Enhancement Payment, PAGA Amount, Settlement Administration Costs, and Net Settlement Amount to be paid to the Settlement Class Members. Defendant shall pay the Employer Taxes separately and in addition to the Gross Settlement Amount. The Gross Settlement Amount is non-reversionary; no portion of the Gross Settlement Payment will return to Defendant. The Gross Settlement Amount is subject to increase, as provided in Paragraph 13.

q. “Individual PAGA Payment” means the *pro rata* share of the PAGA Employee Amount that a PAGA Employee may be eligible to receive under the PAGA Settlement, to be calculated in accordance with Paragraph 15.

r. “Individual Settlement Payment” means the net payment of each Settlement Class Member’s Individual Settlement Share, after reduction for the employee’s share of taxes and withholdings with respect to the wages portion of the Individual Settlement Share, as provided in Paragraph 16.

s. “Individual Settlement Share” means the *pro rata* share of the Net Settlement Amount that a Class Member may be eligible to receive under the Class Settlement, to be calculated in accordance with Paragraph 14.

t. “LWDA Payment” means the amount of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$150,000.00), i.e., 75% of the PAGA Amount, that the Parties have agreed to pay to the LWDA under the PAGA Settlement, as set forth in Paragraph 11.

u. “National Pipe Line Agreements” means the Collective Bargaining Agreements (“CBAs”) that cover Defendant’s employees who are members of the International Union of Operating Engineers (“IUOE”), the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (“IBT”), and the Laborers’ International Union of North America (“LIUNA”).

v. “Net Settlement Amount” means the portion of the Gross Settlement Amount that is available for distribution to Settlement Class Members, which is the Gross Settlement Amount less the Court-approved Attorneys’ Fees and Costs, Enhancement Payment, PAGA Amount, and

1 Settlement Administration Costs.

2 w. “Notice of Objection” means a Settlement Class Member’s written objection to
3 the Class Settlement, which must: (a) contain the case name and number of the Action; (b) contain the
4 objector’s full name, signature, address, telephone number, and the last four (4) digits of the objector’s
5 Social Security number; (c) contain a written statement of all grounds for the objection accompanied
6 by any legal support for such objection; (d) contain copies of any papers, briefs, or other documents
7 upon which the objection is based; and (e) be returned by mail to the Settlement Administrator at the
8 specified address, postmarked on or before the Response Deadline.

9 x. “PAGA Amount” means the allocation of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars and
10 Zero Cents (\$200,000.00) from the Gross Settlement Amount for the PAGA Settlement. Seventy-five
11 percent (75%) of the PAGA Amount, or \$150,000.00, will be paid to the LWDA (i.e., the LWDA
12 Payment) and the remaining twenty-five percent (25%), or \$50,000.00, will be distributed to the
13 PAGA Employees (i.e., the PAGA Employee Amount).

14 y. “PAGA Employees” means all current and former hourly-paid and/or non-
15 exempt non-union and union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed
16 by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the PAGA Period.

17 z. “PAGA Employee Amount” means the amount of Fifty Thousand Dollars and
18 Zero Cents (\$50,000.00), i.e., 25% of the PAGA Amount, to be distributed to PAGA Employees on a
19 *pro rata* basis based on their PAGA Workweeks.

20 aa. “PAGA Period” means the period from September 22, 2021 through October
21 11, 2023 or the date on which the Court grants preliminary approval of the Settlement, whichever is
22 earlier.

23 bb. “PAGA Settlement” means the settlement and resolution of all Released PAGA
24 Claims.

25 cc. “PAGA Workweeks” means the number of weeks each PAGA Employee was
26 employed by Defendant as an hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union or union employee covered
27 under the National Pipe Line Agreements in California during the PAGA Period, which will be
28 calculated by the Settlement Administrator. For purposes of calculating the PAGA Workweeks, the

1 Settlement Administrator shall use the hire date of each PAGA Employee or the beginning of the
2 PAGA Period, whichever is later, as the start date and shall use the termination date (if any) of each
3 PAGA Employee or the end of the PAGA Period, whichever is earlier, as the end date. PAGA
4 Employees shall be credited a full PAGA Workweek for each week they were employed during the
5 PAGA Period, regardless of the number of actual days worked.

6 dd. “Preliminary Approval” means the date on which the Court enters the
7 Preliminary Approval Order.

8 ee. “Preliminary Approval Order” means the order granting preliminary approval
9 of the Settlement, in a form and content mutually agreed to by the Parties, and subject to approval by
10 the Court.

11 ff. “Released Class Claims” means any and all claims, debts, liabilities, demands,
12 obligations, guarantees, costs, expenses, attorneys’ fees, damages, or causes of action which were
13 alleged or which could have been alleged based on the factual allegations in the Operative Complaint,
14 arising during the Class Period, under any federal, state, or local law, and shall specifically include
15 claims for Defendant’s alleged failure to pay overtime and minimum wages, provide compliant meal
16 and rest periods and associated premium payments, timely pay wages upon termination, provide
17 accurate wage statements, and reimburse necessary business-related expenses in violation of
18 California Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 226(a), 226.7, 510, 512(a), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800,
19 and 2802, and Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders, and all claims for attorneys’ fees and
20 costs and statutory interest in connection therewith, California Business and Professions Code sections
21 17200, *et seq.*, and any other claims, including claims for statutory penalties, pertaining to the Class
22 Members.

23 gg. “Released PAGA Claims” means any and all claims arising from any of the
24 factual allegations in the PAGA Letter, arising during the PAGA Period, for civil penalties under the
25 Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, California Labor Code sections 2698 *et seq.*, including all
26 claims for attorneys’ fees and costs related thereto, for Defendant’s alleged failure to pay overtime
27 and minimum wages, provide compliant meal and rest periods and associated premium payments,
28 timely pay wages during employment and upon termination, provide complaint wage statements,

maintain complete and accurate payroll records, and reimburse necessary business-related expenses in violation of California Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 226(a), 226.7, 510, 512(a), 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800, and 2802, and Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders, including *inter alia*, Wage Order 16-2001.

hh. “Released Parties” means Defendant and its current and former officers, directors, members, insurers, shareholders, subsidiaries, affiliates, predecessors, successors, and assigns.

ii. “Request for Exclusion” means a letter submitted by a Class Member indicating a request to be excluded from the Class Settlement, which must: (a) contain the case name and number of the Action; (b) contain the Class Member’s full name, signature, address, telephone number, and last four (4) digits of the Class Member’s Social Security number; (c) clearly state that the Class Member does not wish to be included in the Class Settlement; and (d) be returned by mail to the Settlement Administrator at the specified address, postmarked on or before the Response Deadline.

jj. “Response Deadline” means the deadline by which Class Members must submit a Request for Exclusion, Notice of Objection, and/or Workweeks Dispute, which shall be the date that is sixty (60) calendar days from the initial mailing of the Class Notice by the Settlement Administrator to Class Members, unless the 60th day falls on a Sunday or Federal holiday, in which case the Response Deadline will be extended to the next day on which the United States Postal service is open. The Response Deadline may also be extended by express agreement between Class Counsel and Defendant’s Counsel. Under no circumstances, however, will the Settlement Administrator have the authority to extend the Response Deadline. In the event that a Class Notice is re-mailed to a Class Member, the Response Deadline for that Class Member shall be extended fifteen (15) calendar days from the original Response Deadline.

kk. “Settlement Administrator” means ILYM Group, Inc., or any other third-party class action settlement administrator agreed to by the Parties and approved by the Court for purposes of administering the Settlement. The Parties and their counsel each represent that they do not have any financial interest in the Settlement Administrator or otherwise have a relationship with the Settlement Administrator that could create a conflict of interest.

11. “Settlement Administration Costs” means the costs payable from the Gross Settlement Amount to the Settlement Administrator for administering the Settlement, as set forth in Paragraph 12.

mm. “Settlement Class” or “Settlement Class Member(s)” means all Class Members who do not submit a timely and valid Request for Exclusion.

nn. “Workweeks” means the number of weeks each Class Member was employed by Defendant as an hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union or union employee covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements in California during the Class Period, which will be calculated by the Settlement Administrator. For purposes of calculating the Workweeks, the Settlement Administrator shall use the hire date of each Class Member or the beginning of the Class Period, whichever is later, as the start date and shall use the termination date (if any) of each Class Member or the end of the Class Period, whichever is earlier, as the end date. Class Members shall be credited a full Workweek for each week they were employed during the Class Period, regardless of the number of actual days worked.

oo. “Workweeks Dispute” means a letter submitted by a Class Member disputing the number of Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks to which they have been credited, which must:

(a) contain the case name and number of the Action; (b) contain the Class Member’s full name, signature, address, telephone number, and the last four (4) digits of the Class Member’s Social Security number; (c) clearly state that the Class Member disputes the number of Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks credited to that Class Member and what the Class Member contends is the correct number; and (f) be returned by mail to the Settlement Administrator at the specified address, postmarked on or before the Response Deadline.

CLASS CERTIFICATION

7. For the purposes of this Settlement only, the Parties stipulate to the certification of the Class.

8. The Parties agree that certification for the purpose of settlement is not an admission that certification is proper under Section 382 of the California Code of Civil Procedure. Should, for whatever reason, the Court not grant Final Approval, the Parties' stipulation to class certification as

part of the Settlement shall become null and void ab initio and shall have no bearing on, and shall not be admissible in connection with, the issue of whether or not certification would be inappropriate in a non-settlement context.

TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants, promises, and agreements set forth herein, the Parties agree, subject to the Court's approval, as follows:

9. **Attorneys' Fees and Costs.** Defendant agrees not to oppose or impede any application or motion by Class Counsel for attorneys' fees in the amount up to one-third (1/3) of the Gross Settlement Amount (i.e., \$583,333.33 if the Gross Settlement Amount is \$1,750,000.00) and reimbursement of actual costs and expenses associated with Class Counsel's litigation and settlement of the Action, in an amount not to exceed Thirteen Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$13,000.00), both of which will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount. These amounts will cover any and all work performed and any and all costs incurred by Class Counsel in connection with the litigation of the Action, including without limitation all work performed and costs incurred to date, and all work to be performed and all costs to be incurred in connection with obtaining the Court's approval of this Settlement Agreement, including any objections raised and any appeals necessitated by those objections. Class Counsel shall be solely and legally responsible for correctly characterizing this compensation for tax purposes and for paying any taxes on the amounts received. The Settlement Administrator shall issue an IRS Form 1099 to Class Counsel for the Attorneys' Fees and Costs. Any portion of the requested Attorneys' Fees and Costs that is not awarded by the Court to Class Counsel shall be reallocated to the Net Settlement Amount for the benefit of the Settlement Class Members. The Court's ruling on the request for Attorneys' Fees and Costs shall not affect the enforceability of this Agreement or the terms contained herein.

10. **Enhancement Payment.** Defendant agrees not to oppose or impede any application or motion by Plaintiff for an Enhancement Payment in the amount up to Ten Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$10,000.00). The Enhancement Payment, which will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, subject to Court approval, will be in addition to his Individual Settlement Payment as a Settlement Class Member and Individual PAGA Payment as a PAGA Employee. Plaintiff shall be

solely and legally responsible for correctly characterizing this compensation for tax purposes and for paying any taxes on the amounts received. The Settlement Administrator shall issue an IRS Form 1099 to Plaintiff for the Enhancement Payment. Any portion of the requested Enhancement Payment that is not awarded by the Court to Plaintiff shall be reallocated to the Net Settlement Amount for the benefit of the Settlement Class Members. The Court's ruling on the request for the Enhancement Payment shall not affect the enforceability of this Agreement or the terms contained herein.

11. PAGA Amount. Subject to approval by the Court, the Parties agree that the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$200,000.00) shall be allocated from the Gross Settlement Amount toward penalties under the Private Attorneys General Act, California Labor Code Section 2698, *et seq.* (i.e., the PAGA Amount), of which seventy-five percent (75%), or \$150,000.00, will be paid to the LWDA (i.e., the LWDA Payment) and twenty-five percent (25%), or \$50,000.00, will be distributed to PAGA Employees (i.e., the PAGA Employee Amount) on a *pro rata* basis, based on the total number of PAGA Workweeks of each PAGA Employee during the PAGA Period (i.e., the Individual PAGA Payments).

12. Settlement Administration Costs. The Settlement Administrator will be paid for the reasonable costs of administration of the Settlement and distribution of payments under the Settlement, which is currently not to exceed Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$8,500.00). These costs, which will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, subject to Court approval, will include, *inter alia*, printing, distributing, and tracking Class Notices and other documents for the Settlement, calculating and distributing payments due under the Settlement, issuing of 1099 and W-2 IRS Forms and all required tax reporting, filings, withholdings, and remittances, providing necessary reports and declarations, uploading key documents, such as the Class Notice, Settlement Agreement, Preliminary Approval Order, and Final Approval Order and Judgment to a portion of its existing website, and other duties and responsibilities set forth herein to process the Settlement, ad as requested by the Parties. To the extent the actual Settlement Administrator's costs are greater than the estimated amount stated herein, such excess amount will be deducted from the Gross Settlement Amount, subject to approval by the Court. Any portion of the estimated, designated, and/or awarded Settlement Administration Costs which are not in fact required to fulfill payment to the Settlement Administrator

to undertake the required settlement administration duties shall be reallocated to the Net Settlement Amount for the benefit of the Settlement Class Members.

13. Escalator Clause. Defendant has represented that the Class Members were employed for a total of 12,515 workweeks during the period from September 26, 2018 through May 31, 2023. If it is determined by the Settlement Administrator that the total number of workweeks employed by the Class Members during that time period exceeds 12,515 by more than 7% (i.e., by more than 13,391 workweeks), then the Gross Settlement Amount will be increased on a *pro rata* basis equal to the percentage increase in the number of workweeks employed by the Class Members above 7%. For example, if the number of workweeks during the period from September 26, 2018 through May 31, 2023 increases by 8% to 13,516 workweeks, then the Gross Settlement Amount will increase by 1%.

14. Individual Settlement Share Calculations. Individual Settlement Shares will be calculated and apportioned from the Net Settlement Amount based on the Class Members' number of Workweeks, as follows:

a. After Preliminary Approval, the Settlement Administrator will divide the Net Settlement Amount by the Workweeks of all Class Members to yield the "Estimated Workweek Value," and multiply each Class Member's individual Workweeks by the Estimated Workweek Value to yield an estimated Individual Settlement Share that each Class Member may be entitled to receive under the Class Settlement.

b. After Final Approval, the Settlement Administrator will divide the final Net Settlement Amount by the Workweeks of all Settlement Class Members to yield the "Final Workweek Value," and multiply each Settlement Class Member's individual Workweeks by the Final Workweek Value to yield her, his, or their final Individual Settlement Share.

15. Individual PAGA Payment Calculations. Individual PAGA Payments will be calculated and apportioned from the PAGA Employee Amount based on the PAGA Employees' number of PAGA Workweeks, as follows: The Settlement Administrator will divide the PAGA Employee Amount, i.e., 25% of the PAGA Amount, by the PAGA Workweeks of all PAGA Employees to yield the "PAGA Workweek Value," and multiply each PAGA Employee's individual PAGA Workweeks by the PAGA Workweek Value to yield each PAGA Employee's Individual

1 PAGA Payment.

2 16. Tax Treatment of Individual Settlement Shares and Individual PAGA Payments. Each
3 Individual Settlement Share will be allocated as follows: twenty percent (20%) wages and eighty
4 percent (80%) penalties, interest, and non-wage damages. The portion allocated to wages will be
5 reported on an IRS Form W-2 and the portions allocated to penalties, interest, and non-wage damages
6 will be reported on an IRS Form 1099 (if applicable) by the Settlement Administrator. The Settlement
7 Administrator will withhold the employee's share of taxes and withholdings with respect to the wages
8 portion of the Individual Settlement Shares, and issue checks to Settlement Class Members for their
9 Individual Settlement Payments (i.e., payment of their Individual Settlement Share net of these taxes
10 and withholdings). The Employer Taxes will be paid separately and in addition to the Gross
11 Settlement Amount. Each Individual PAGA Payment will be allocated as one hundred percent (100%)
12 penalties and will be reported on an IRS Form 1099 (if applicable) by the Settlement Administrator.

13 17. Administration of Taxes by the Settlement Administrator. The Settlement
14 Administrator will be responsible for issuing to Plaintiff, Settlement Class Members, PAGA
15 Employees, and Class Counsel any tax forms (i.e., IRS Forms W-2, IRS Forms 1099, etc.) as may be
16 required by law for all amounts paid pursuant to this Settlement Agreement. The Settlement
17 Administrator will also be responsible for calculating the Employer Taxes and forwarding all payroll
18 taxes and other legally required withholdings to the appropriate government authorities.

19 18. Tax Liability. Plaintiff, Class Counsel, Defendant, and Defendant's Counsel do not
20 intend anything contained in this Settlement Agreement to constitute advice regarding taxes or
21 taxability, nor shall anything in this Settlement Agreement be relied on as such. Plaintiff, Settlement
22 Class Members, and PAGA Employees are not relying on any statement, representation, or calculation
23 by Defendant, the Settlement Administrator, or Class Counsel in this regard. Plaintiff, Settlement
24 Class Members, and PAGA Employees understand and agree that Plaintiff, Settlement Class
25 Members, and PAGA Employees will be solely responsible for the payment of any taxes and penalties
26 assessed on the payments described in this Settlement Agreement. Plaintiff, Settlement Class
27 Members, and PAGA Employees should consult with their tax advisors concerning the tax
28 consequences of any payment they receive under the Settlement.

1 19. Circular 230 Disclaimer. EACH PARTY TO THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT
2 (FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, THE “ACKNOWLEDGING PARTY” AND EACH PARTY
3 TO THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT OTHER THAN THE ACKNOWLEDGING PARTY, AN
4 “OTHER PARTY”) ACKNOWLEDGES AND AGREES THAT (1) NO PROVISION OF THIS
5 SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT, AND NO WRITTEN COMMUNICATION OR DISCLOSURE
6 BETWEEN OR AMONG THE PARTIES OR THEIR ATTORNEYS AND OTHER ADVISERS, IS
7 OR WAS INTENDED TO BE, NOR WILL ANY SUCH COMMUNICATION OR DISCLOSURE
8 CONSTITUTE OR BE CONSTRUED OR BE RELIED UPON AS, TAX ADVICE WITHIN THE
9 MEANING OF UNITED STATES TREASURY DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR 230 (31 CFR PART
10 10, AS AMENDED); (2) THE ACKNOWLEDGING PARTY (A) HAS RELIED EXCLUSIVELY
11 UPON HIS, HER, OR ITS OWN, INDEPENDENT LEGAL AND TAX COUNSEL FOR ADVICE
12 (INCLUDING TAX ADVICE) IN CONNECTION WITH THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT, (B)
13 HAS NOT ENTERED INTO THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEEMNT BASED UPON THE
14 RECOMMENDATION OF ANY OTHER PARTY OR ANY ATTORNEY OR ADVISOR TO ANY
15 OTHER PARTY, AND (C) IS NOT ENTITLED TO RELY UPON ANY COMMUNICATION OR
16 DISCLOSURE BY ANY ATTORNEY OR ADVISOR TO ANY OTHER PARTY TO AVOID ANY
17 TAX PENALTY THAT MAY BE IMPOSED ON THE ACKNOWLEDGING PARTY; AND (3) NO
18 ATTORNEY OR ADVISER TO ANY OTHER PARTY HAS IMPOSED ANY LIMITATION THAT
19 PROTECTS THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF ANY SUCH ATTORNEY’S OR ADVISOR’S TAX
20 STRATEGIES (REGARDLESS OF WHETHER SUCH LIMITATION IS LEGALLY BINDING)
21 UPON DISCLOSURE BY THE ACKNOWLEDING PARTY OF THE TAX TREATMENT OR
22 TAX STRUCTURE OF ANY TRANSACTION, INCLUDING ANY TRANSACTION
23 CONTEMPLATED BY THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.

24 20. Settlement Awards Do Not Trigger Additional Benefits. All payments made under the
25 Settlement shall be deemed to be paid to the payee solely in the year in which such payments actually
26 are issued to the payee. It is expressly understood and agreed that payments made under this
27 Settlement shall not in any way entitle Plaintiff, Settlement Class Members, or any PAGA Employee
28 to additional compensation or benefits under any new or additional compensation or benefits, or any

bonus, contest, or other compensation or benefit plan or agreement in place during the Class Period, nor will it entitle Plaintiff, Settlement Class Members, or any PAGA Employee to any increased retirement, 401K benefits or matching benefits, or deferred compensation benefits (notwithstanding any contrary language or agreement in any benefit or compensation plan document that might have been in effect during the Class Period).

21. Duties of the Parties with Respect to Obtaining Preliminary Approval of the Settlement.

Upon execution of this Settlement Agreement, Plaintiff will obtain a hearing date from the Court for Plaintiff's motion for preliminary approval of the Settlement, which Plaintiff and Class Counsel will be responsible for drafting, and submit this Settlement Agreement to the Court in support of said motion. Class Counsel will provide Defendant's Counsel a draft of the preliminary approval motion before filing it with the Court. Defendant agrees not to oppose the motion for preliminary approval of the Settlement consistent with this Settlement Agreement. By way of said motion, Plaintiff will apply for the entry of the Preliminary Approval Order seeking the following:

- a. Conditionally certifying the Class for settlement purposes only;
- b. Granting Preliminary Approval of the Settlement;
- c. Preliminarily appointing Plaintiff as the representative of the Class;
- d. Preliminarily appointing Class Counsel as counsel for the Class;
- e. Approving as to form and content, the mutually-agreed upon and proposed Class Notice and directing its mailing by First Class U.S. Mail;
- f. Approving the manner and method for Class Members to request exclusion from or object to the Class Settlement as contained herein and within the Class Notice;
- g. Scheduling a Final Approval Hearing at which the Court will determine whether Final Approval of the Settlement should be granted.

22. Notice of Settlement to the LWDA. Pursuant to California Labor Code § 2699(1)(2), Class Counsel shall notify the LWDA of the Settlement upon filing the motion for preliminary approval of the Settlement.

23. Delivery of Class List. Within fourteen (14) calendar days of Preliminary Approval, Defendant will provide the Class List to the Settlement Administrator.

1 24. Notice by First-Class U.S. Mail.

2 a. Within seven (7) calendar days after receiving the Class List from Defendant,
3 the Settlement Administrator will perform a search based on the National Change of Address Database
4 or any other similar services available, such as provided by Experian, for information to update and
5 correct for any known or identifiable address changes, and will mail a Class Notice in English (in the
6 form attached as **Exhibit A** to this Settlement Agreement) to all Class Members via First-Class U.S.
7 Mail, using the most current, known mailing addresses identified by the Settlement Administrator.

8 b. Any Class Notice returned to the Settlement Administrator as undeliverable on
9 or before the Response Deadline will be sent promptly via First-Class U.S. Mail to the forwarding
10 address affixed thereto and the Settlement Administrator will indicate the date of such re-mailing on
11 the Class Notice. If no forwarding address is provided, the Settlement Administrator will promptly
12 attempt to determine the correct address using a skip-trace or other search, using the name, address,
13 and/or Social Security number of the Class Member, and perform a single re-mailing within five (5)
14 calendar days.

15 c. Compliance with the procedures described herein above shall constitute due and
16 sufficient notice to Class Members of the Settlement and shall satisfy the requirements of due process.
17 Nothing else shall be required of or done by the Parties, Class Counsel, or Defendant's Counsel to
18 provide notice of the Settlement.

19 25. Disputes Regarding Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks. Class Members will have
20 an opportunity to dispute the number of Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks to which they have
21 been credited, as reflected in their respective Class Notices, by submitting a timely and valid
22 Workweeks Dispute to the Settlement Administrator, by mail, on or before the Response Deadline.
23 The date of the postmark on the return mailing envelope will be the exclusive means to determine
24 whether a Workweeks Dispute has been timely submitted. Absent evidence rebutting the accuracy of
25 Defendant's records and data as they pertain to the number of Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks
26 to be credited to a disputing Class Member, Defendant's records will be presumed to be correct and
27 determinative of the dispute. However, if a Class Member produces information and/or documents to
28 the contrary, the Settlement Administrator will evaluate the materials submitted by the Class Member

1 and the Settlement Administrator will resolve and determine the number of eligible Workweeks and/or
2 PAGA Workweeks that the disputing Class Member should be credited with under the Settlement.
3 The Settlement Administrator's decision on such disputes will be final and non-appealable.

4 26. Requesting Exclusion from the Class Settlement. Any Class Member wishing to be
5 excluded from the Class Settlement must submit a timely and valid Request for Exclusion to the
6 Settlement Administrator, by mail, on or before the Response Deadline. The date of the postmark on
7 the return mailing envelope will be the exclusive means to determine whether a Request for Exclusion
8 has been timely submitted. The Settlement Administrator will certify jointly to Class Counsel and
9 Defendant's Counsel the number of timely and valid Requests for Exclusion that are submitted, and
10 also identify the individuals who have submitted a timely and valid Request for Exclusion in a
11 declaration that is to be filed with the Court in advance of the Final Approval Hearing. At no time
12 will any of the Parties or their counsel seek to solicit or otherwise encourage Class Members to request
13 exclusion from the Class Settlement. Any Class Member who submits a Request for Exclusion is
14 prohibited from making any objection to the Class Settlement. Any Class Member who submits a
15 timely and valid Request for Exclusion will not be bound by the Class Settlement and will not be
16 issued an Individual Settlement Payment. Any Class Member who does not affirmatively request
17 exclusion from the Class Settlement by submitting a timely and valid Request for Exclusion will be
18 bound by all of the terms of the Class Settlement, including and not limited to those pertaining to the
19 Released Class Claims, as well as any judgment that may be entered by the Court if it grants Final
20 Approval to the Settlement. Notwithstanding the above, all PAGA Employees will be bound to the
21 PAGA Settlement and will be issued their Individual PAGA Payment, irrespective of whether they
22 submit a Request for Exclusion.

23 27. Objecting to the Class Settlement. To object to the Class Settlement, Settlement Class
24 Members must submit a timely and complete Notice of Objection to the Settlement Administrator, by
25 mail, on or before the Response Deadline. The date of the postmark on the return mailing envelope
26 will be the exclusive means to determine whether a Notice of Objection has been timely submitted.
27 The Settlement Administrator will certify jointly to Class Counsel and Defendant's Counsel the
28 number of Notices of Objection that are submitted (specifying which ones were timely and complete

1 and which were not), and also attach them to a declaration that is to be filed with the Court in advance
2 of the Final Approval Hearing. At no time will any of the Parties or their counsel seek to solicit or
3 otherwise encourage Settlement Class Members to object to the Class Settlement or appeal from the
4 Final Approval Order and Judgment. Settlement Class Members, individually or through counsel,
5 may also present their objection orally at the Final Approval Hearing, regardless of whether they have
6 submitted a Notice of Objection.

7 28. Reports by the Settlement Administrator. The Settlement Administrator shall provide
8 weekly reports to counsel for the Parties providing: (a) the number of undeliverable and re-mailed
9 Class Notices; (ii) the number of Class Members who have submitted Workweeks Disputes; (iii) the
10 number of Class Members who have submitted Requests for Exclusion; and (iv) the number of
11 Settlement Class Members who have submitted Notices of Objection. Additionally, the Settlement
12 Administrator will provide to counsel for the Parties any updated reports regarding the administration
13 of the Settlement Agreement as needed or requested, and immediately notify the Parties when it
14 receives a request from an individual or any other entity regarding inclusion in the Class and/or
15 Settlement or regarding a Workweeks Dispute.

16 29. Defendant's Right to Rescind. If more than ten percent (10%) or more of the Class
17 Members submit timely and valid Requests for Exclusion, Defendant may elect to rescind the
18 Settlement Agreement. Defendant must exercise this right of rescission in writing that is provided to
19 Class Counsel within fourteen (14) calendar days of the Settlement Administrator notifying the Parties
20 of the number of Class Members who have submitted timely and valid Requests for Exclusion
21 following the Response Deadline. If Defendant exercises this option, Defendant shall pay any costs
22 of settlement administration owed to the Settlement Administrator incurred up to that date.

23 30. Certification of Completion. Upon completion of administration of the Settlement, the
24 Settlement Administrator will provide a written declaration under oath to certify such completion to
25 the Court and counsel for all Parties.

26 31. Duties of the Parties with Respect to Obtaining Final Approval of the Settlement. After
27 the Response Deadline, a Final Approval Hearing will be conducted to determine whether Final
28 Approval of the Settlement should be granted, along with the amounts properly payable for: (a)

Individual Settlement Shares; (b) Individual PAGA Payments; (c) LWDA Payment; (d) Attorneys' Fees and Costs; (e) Enhancement Payment; and (e) Settlement Administration Costs. The Final Approval Hearing will not be held earlier than thirty (30) calendar days after the Response Deadline. Plaintiff and Class Counsel will be responsible for drafting the motion seeking Final Approval of the Settlement. Class Counsel will provide Defendant's Counsel a draft of the final approval motion before filing it with the Court. By way of said motion, Plaintiff will apply for the entry of the Final Approval Order and Judgment, which will provide for, in substantial part, the following:

- a. Approval of the Settlement as fair, reasonable, and adequate, and directing consummation of its terms and provisions;
- b. Certification of the Settlement Class;
- c. Approval of the application for Attorneys' Fees and Costs to Class Counsel;
- d. Approval of the application for Enhancement Payment to Plaintiff;
- e. Directing Defendant to fund all amounts due under the Settlement Agreement and ordered by the Court; and
- f. Entering judgment in the Action, while maintaining continuing jurisdiction, in conformity with California Rules of Court 3.769 and the Settlement Agreement.

32. Funding of the Gross Settlement Amount. No later than ten (10) business days after the Effective Date, Defendant will deposit the Gross Settlement Amount into a Qualified Settlement Fund ("QSF") within the meaning of Treasury Regulation Section 1.468B-1, *et seq.*, to be established by the Settlement Administrator. Defendant shall provide all information necessary for the Settlement Administrator to calculate necessary payroll taxes including its official name, 8-digit state unemployment insurance tax ID number, and other information requested by the Settlement Administrator, no later than five (5) business days after the Effective Date.

33. Distribution of the Gross Settlement Amount. Within five (5) business days of the funding of the Gross Settlement Amount, the Settlement Administrator will issue the Individual Settlement Payments to Settlement Class Members, Individual PAGA Payments to PAGA Employees, LWDA Payment to the LWDA, Enhancement Payment to Plaintiff, and Settlement Administration Costs to itself. The Settlement Administrator shall also set aside the Employer Taxes and all employee-side payroll taxes, contributions, and withholding, and timely forward these to the

appropriate government authorities.

34. Settlement Checks. The Settlement Administrator will be responsible for undertaking appropriate deductions, required tax reporting, and issuing the Individual Settlement Payments by way of check to the Settlement Class Members and the Individual PAGA Payments by way of check to the PAGA Employees in accordance with this Settlement Agreement. When issuing payments, the Settlement Administrator may combine the Individual Settlement Payment and Individual PAGA Payment into one check if the intended recipient for both payments is one individual. Settlement Class Members and PAGA Employees are not required to submit a claim to be issued an Individual Settlement Payment and/or Individual PAGA Payment. Each Individual Settlement Payment and Individual PAGA Payment check will be valid and negotiable for one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days from the date the checks are issued, and thereafter, shall be canceled. Any funds associated with such canceled checks shall be distributed by the Settlement Administrator to the State of California's Unclaimed Property Fund in the name of the Settlement Class Member and/or PAGA Employee at issue. The Settlement Administrator shall undertake amended and/or supplemental tax filings and reporting required under applicable local, state, and federal tax laws that are necessitated due to the cancelation of any Individual Settlement Payment and/or Individual PAGA Payment checks. Settlement Class Members whose Individual Settlement Payment checks are canceled shall, nevertheless, be bound by the Class Settlement, and PAGA Employees whose Individual PAGA Payment checks are cancelled shall, nevertheless, be bound by the PAGA Settlement.

35. Class Settlement Release. Upon the full funding of the Gross Settlement Amount, Plaintiff and all Settlement Class Members will be deemed to have fully, finally, and forever released, settled, compromised, relinquished, and discharged the Released Parties of all Released Class Claims.

36. PAGA Settlement Release. Upon the full funding of the Gross Settlement Amount, Plaintiff, the State of California with respect to all PAGA Employees, and all PAGA Employees will be deemed to have fully, finally, and forever released, settled, compromised, relinquished, and discharged the Released Parties of all Released PAGA Claims.

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1 37. Plaintiff's General Release. Upon the full funding of the Gross Settlement Amount,
2 Plaintiff, individually and on his own behalf, will be deemed to have fully, finally, and forever
3 released, settled, compromised, relinquished, and discharged the Released Parties from any and all
4 claims, debts, liabilities, demands, obligations, guarantees, costs, expenses, attorneys' fees, damages,
5 or causes of action of any kind or nature whatsoever, known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected,
6 asserted or unasserted, which Plaintiff, at any time of execution of this Settlement Agreement, had or
7 claimed to have or may have, including but not limited to any and all claims arising out of, relating to,
8 or resulting from his employment and/or separation of employment with the Released Parties,
9 including any claims arising under any federal, state, or local law, statute, ordinance, rule, or regulation
10 or Executive Order relating to employment, including, but in no way limited to, any claim under Title
11 VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended ("Title VII"), 42 U.S.C. § 1981; the Americans with
12 Disabilities Act ("ADA"); the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"); the Employee Retirement
13 Income Security Act ("ERISA"); the California Family Rights Act ("CFRA"); the California Fair
14 Employment and Housing Act ("FEHA"); all claims for wages or penalties under the Fair Labor
15 Standards Act ("FLSA"); all claims for wages or penalties under the California Labor Code; Business
16 and Professions Code sections 17200 *et seq.*; all laws relating to violation of public policy, retaliation,
17 or interference with legal rights; any and all other employment or discrimination laws; whistleblower
18 claims; any tort, fraud, or constitutional claims; and any breach of contract claims or claims of
19 promissory estoppel. It is agreed that this is a general release and is to be broadly construed as a
20 release of all claims, provided that, notwithstanding the foregoing, this Paragraph expressly does not
21 include a release of any claims that cannot be released hereunder by law, including claims for workers
22 compensation. Plaintiff understands and expressly agrees that this Settlement Agreement extends to
23 claims that he has against Defendant, of whatever nature and kind, known or unknown, suspected or
24 unsuspected, vested or contingent, past, present, or future, arising from or attributable to an incident
25 or event, occurring in whole or in part, on or before the execution of this Settlement Agreement. Any
26 and all rights granted under any state or federal law or regulation limiting the effect of this Settlement
27 Agreement, including the provisions of Section 1542 of the California Civil Code, ARE HEREBY
28 EXPRESSLY WAIVED. Section 1542 of the California Civil Code reads as follows:

1 **A GENERAL RELEASE DOES NOT EXTEND TO CLAIMS THAT THE CREDITOR**
2 **OR RELEASING PARTY DOES NOT KNOW OR SUSPECT TO EXIST IN HIS OR HER**
3 **FAVOR AT THE TIME OF EXECUTING THE RELEASE AND THAT, IF KNOWN BY HIM**
4 **OR HER, WOULD HAVE MATERIALLY AFFECTED HIS OR HER SETTLEMENT WITH**
5 **THE DEBTOR OR RELEASED PARTY.**

6 38. Final Approval Order and Judgment. The Parties shall provide the Settlement
7 Administrator with a copy of the Final Approval Order and Judgment once it is entered by the Court,
8 and the Settlement Administrator shall post the Final Approval Order and Judgment on its website for
9 sixty (60) calendar days. No individualized notice of the Final Approval Order and Judgment to the
10 Class will be required.

11 39. Continued Jurisdiction. After entry of the judgment pursuant to the Settlement, the
12 Court will have continuing jurisdiction pursuant to Rule 3.769 of the California Rules of Court and
13 Section 664.6 of the California Code of Civil Procedure, for purposes of addressing: (a) the
14 interpretation and enforcement of the terms of the Settlement, (b) settlement administration matters,
15 and (c) such post-judgment matters as may be appropriate under court rules or as set forth in this
16 Settlement Agreement.

17 40. Effects of Termination or Rescission of Settlement. Termination or rescission of the
18 Settlement Agreement shall have the following effects:

19 a. The Settlement Agreement shall be void and shall have no force or effect, and
20 no Party shall be bound by any of its terms;

21 b. In the event the Settlement Agreement is terminated, Defendant shall have no
22 obligation to make any payments to any Party, Class Member, or attorney, except that the terminating
23 Party shall pay the Settlement Administrator for services rendered up to the date the Settlement
24 Administrator is notified that the Settlement has been terminated;

25 c. The Preliminary Approval Order, Final Approval Order and Judgment,
26 including any order certifying the Class, shall be vacated;

27 d. The Settlement Agreement and all negotiations, statements, and proceedings
28 relating thereto shall be without prejudice to the rights of any of the Parties, all of whom shall be

1 restored to their respective positions in the Action prior to the execution of the Settlement Agreement;

2 e. Neither this Settlement Agreement, nor any ancillary documents, actions,
3 statements, or filings in furtherance of the Settlement (including all matters associated with the
4 mediation) shall be admissible or offered into evidence in the Action or any other action for any
5 purpose whatsoever; and

6 f. Any documents generated to bring the Settlement into effect, will be null and
7 void, and any order or judgment entered by the Court in furtherance of this Settlement Agreement will
8 likewise be treated as void from the beginning.

9 41. No Prior Assignments. The Parties and their counsel represent, covenant, and warrant
10 that they have not directly or indirectly assigned, transferred, encumbered, or purported to assign,
11 transfer, or encumber to any person or entity any portion of any liability, claim, demand, action, cause
12 of action or right herein released and discharged.

13 42. Exhibits Incorporated by Reference. The terms of this Settlement include the terms set
14 forth in any attached exhibits, which are incorporated by this reference as though fully set forth herein.
15 Any exhibits to this Settlement Agreement are an integral part of the Settlement.

16 43. Entire Agreement. This Settlement Agreement and any attached exhibits constitute the
17 entirety of the Parties' agreement relating to the settlement and transaction completed thereby, and all
18 prior or contemporaneous agreements, understandings, representations, and statements, whether oral
19 or written and whether by a Party or such Party's legal counsel, are merged herein. No other prior or
20 contemporaneous written or oral agreements may be deemed binding on the Parties. The Parties
21 expressly recognize California Civil Code § 1625 and California Code of Civil Procedure § 1856(a),
22 which provide that a written agreement is to be construed according to its terms and may not be varied
23 or contradicted by extrinsic evidence, and the Parties agree that no such extrinsic oral or written
24 representations or terms will modify, vary, or contradict the terms of this Settlement Agreement.

25 44. Interim Stay of Proceedings. The Parties agree to hold in abeyance all proceedings in
26 the Action (including with respect to California Code of Civil Procedure § 583.310), except such
27 proceedings necessary to implement and complete this Settlement Agreement, pending the Final
28 Approval Hearing to be conducted by the Court.

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1 45. Amendment or Modification. Prior to the filing of the motion for preliminary approval
2 of the Settlement, the Parties may not amend or modify any provision of this Settlement Agreement
3 except by written agreement signed by counsel for all Parties. After the filing of the motion for
4 preliminary approval of the Settlement, the Parties may not amend or modify any provision of this
5 Settlement Agreement except by written agreement signed by counsel for all the Parties and subject
6 to Court approval. A waiver or amendment of any provision of this Settlement Agreement will not
7 constitute a waiver of any other provision.

8 46. Authorization to Enter into Settlement Agreement. Counsel for all Parties warrant and
9 represent they are expressly authorized by the Parties whom they represent to negotiate this Settlement
10 Agreement and to take all appropriate action required or permitted to be taken by such Parties pursuant
11 to this Settlement Agreement to effectuate its terms and to execute any other documents required to
12 effectuate the terms of this Settlement Agreement. The Parties warrant that they understand and have
13 full authority to enter into this Settlement Agreement, and further intend that this Settlement
14 Agreement will be fully enforceable and binding on all Parties, and agree that it will be admissible
15 and subject to disclosure in any proceeding to enforce its terms, notwithstanding any mediation
16 confidentiality provisions that otherwise might apply under state or federal law.

17 47. Signatories. It is agreed that because the members of the Class are so numerous, it is
18 impossible or impractical to have each Settlement Class Member or PAGA Employee execute this
19 Settlement Agreement. The Class Notice will advise all Class Members of the binding nature of the
20 Class Settlement as to the Settlement Class Members and the binding nature of the PAGA Settlement
21 as to the PAGA Employees, and the releases provided for by this Settlement Agreement shall have
22 the same force and effect as if this Settlement Agreement were executed by each Settlement Class
23 Member and PAGA Employee.

24 48. Binding on Successors and Assigns. This Settlement Agreement will be binding upon,
25 and inure to the benefit of, the successors or assigns of the Parties hereto, as previously defined.

26 49. California Law Governs. All terms of this Settlement Agreement and attached exhibits
27 hereto will be governed by and interpreted according to the laws of the State of California.

28 50. Execution and Counterparts. This Settlement Agreement is subject only to the
execution of all Parties. However, this Settlement Agreement may be executed in one or more
counterparts. All executed counterparts and each of them, including facsimile, electronic, and scanned

copies of the signature page, will be deemed to be one and the same instrument.

51. Acknowledgement that the Settlement is Fair and Reasonable. The Parties believe this Settlement Agreement is a fair, adequate, and reasonable settlement of the Action and have arrived at this Settlement after arm's length negotiations in the context of adversarial litigation with the assistance of an experienced and neutral mediator, taking into account all relevant factors, present and potential. The Parties further acknowledge that they are each represented by competent counsel and that they have had an opportunity to consult with their counsel regarding the fairness and reasonableness of this Settlement Agreement. In addition, if necessary to obtain approval of the Settlement, the Mediator may execute a declaration supporting the Settlement and the reasonableness of the Settlement and the Court may, in its discretion, contact the Mediator to discuss the Settlement and whether or not the Settlement is objectively fair and reasonable.

52. Invalidity of Any Provision. In the event that the Court indicates any provision of this Settlement Agreement may be invalid, the Parties agree to ask the Court to first attempt to construe the provision as valid to the fullest extent possible consistent with applicable precedents so as to define all provisions of this Settlement Agreement valid and enforceable.

53. Plaintiff's Cooperation. Plaintiff agrees to sign this Settlement Agreement and, by signing this Settlement Agreement, is hereby bound by the terms herein and agrees to fully cooperate to implement the Settlement.

54. Non-Admission of Liability. The Parties enter into this Settlement Agreement to resolve the dispute that has arisen between them and to avoid the burden, expense, and risk of continued litigation. In entering into this Settlement Agreement, Defendant does not admit, and specifically denies, it has violated any federal, state, or local law; violated any regulations or guidelines promulgated pursuant to any statute or any other applicable laws, regulations, or legal requirements; breached any contract; violated or breached any duty; engaged in any misrepresentation or deception; or engaged in any other unlawful conduct with respect to its employees. Neither this Settlement Agreement, nor any of its terms or provisions, nor any of the negotiations connected with it, shall be construed as an admission or concession by Defendant of any such violations or failures to comply with any applicable law. Except as necessary in a proceeding to enforce the terms of this Settlement

1 Agreement, this Settlement Agreement and its terms and provisions shall not be offered or received
2 as evidence in any action or proceeding to establish any liability or admission on the part of Defendant
3 or to establish the existence of any condition constituting a violation of, or a non-compliance with,
4 federal, state, local or other applicable law.

5 55. Captions. The captions and paragraph numbers in this Settlement Agreement are
6 inserted for the reader's convenience, and in no way define, limit, construe, or describe the scope or
7 intent of the provisions of this Settlement Agreement.

8 56. Mutual Preparation. The Parties have had a full opportunity to negotiate the terms and
9 conditions of this Settlement Agreement. Accordingly, this Settlement Agreement will not be
10 construed more strictly against one Party than another merely by virtue of the fact that it may have
11 been prepared by counsel for one of the Parties, it being recognized that, because of the arms-length
12 negotiations between the Parties, all Parties have contributed equally to the preparation of this
13 Settlement Agreement.

14 57. Representation By Counsel. The Parties acknowledge that they have been represented
15 by counsel throughout all negotiations that preceded the execution of this Settlement Agreement, and
16 that this Settlement Agreement has been executed with the consent and advice of counsel, and
17 reviewed in full.

18 58. All Terms Subject to Final Court Approval. All amounts and procedures described in
19 this Settlement Agreement herein will be subject to final Court approval.

20 59. Notices. All notices, demands, and other communications to be provided concerning
21 the Settlement Agreement shall be in writing and deemed to have been duly given as of the third
22 business day after mailing by First Class U.S. Mail, or the day sent by email or messenger, addressed
23 as follows:

24 To Plaintiff and Class Counsel:
25 Jonathan M. Genish
jgenish@blackstonepc.com
26 Miriam L. Schimmel
mschimmel@blackstonepc.com
27 Joana Fang
jfang@blackstonepc.com
28 Alexandra Rose
arose@blackstonepc.com

BLACKSTONE LAW, APC
8383 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 745
Beverly Hills, California 90211
Tel: (310) 622-4278 / Fax: (855) 786-6356

To Defendant:
Robert E. Dunn
rdunn@eimerstahl.com
EIMER STAHL LLP
99 Almaden Boulevard, Suite 600
San Jose, California 95113
Tel: (408) 889-1690 / Fax: (312) 692-1718

60. Cooperation and Execution of Necessary Documents. All Parties and their counsel will cooperate with each other in good faith and use their best efforts to implement the Settlement, including and not limited to, executing all documents to the extent reasonably necessary to effectuate the terms of this Settlement Agreement. If the Parties are unable to reach agreement on the form or content of any document needed to implement the Settlement Agreement, or on any supplemental provisions that may become necessary to effectuate the terms of this Settlement Agreement, the Parties may seek the assistance of the Mediator and then the Court to resolve such disagreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto knowingly and voluntarily executed this Joint Stipulation of Class Action and PAGA Settlement between Plaintiff and Defendant:

IT IS SO AGREED.

PLAINTIFF MICHAEL BRAVO

Dated: 09/18/2023



Michael Bravo

**DEFENDANT MICHELS PACIFIC
ENERGY, INC.**

Dated: _____

Full Name: _____

Title: _____
On behalf of Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.

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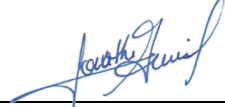
Tel: (408) 889-1690 / Fax: (312) 692-1718

JOINT STIPULATION OF CLASS ACTION AND PAGA SETTLEMENT

1 **APPROVED AS TO FORM ONLY:**

2 **BLACKSTONE LAW, APC**

3 Dated: 9/19/2023


Jonathan M. Genish
Attorneys for Plaintiff Michael Bravo
and Proposed Class Counsel

6 **EIMER STAHL LLP**

7 Dated: 9/18/2023


Robert E. Dunn
Attorneys for Defendant Michels Pacific Energy,
Inc.

EXHIBIT A

NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.
Superior Court of California for the County of Santa Clara, Case No. 22CV403427

PLEASE READ THIS CLASS NOTICE CAREFULLY.

You have received this Class Notice because Defendant's records indicate that you may be eligible to take part in the class action settlement reached in the above-referenced case.

You do not need to take any action to receive a settlement payment.

This Class Notice is designed to advise you of your rights and options with respect to the settlement, and how you can request to be excluded from the Class Settlement, object to the Class Settlement, and/or dispute the number of Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks that you are credited with, if you so choose.

YOU ARE NOTIFIED THAT: A class and representative action settlement has been reached between Plaintiff Michael Bravo ("Plaintiff") and Defendant Michels Pacific Energy, Inc. ("Defendant") (Plaintiff and Defendant are collectively referred to as the "Parties") in the case entitled *Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.*, Santa Clara County Superior Court, Case No. 22CV403427 ("Action"), which may affect your legal rights. On [date of Preliminary Approval], the Court granted preliminary approval of the settlement and scheduled a hearing on [hearing date] at [hearing time] ("Final Approval Hearing") to determine whether or not the Court should grant final approval of the settlement.

I. IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

"Class" means all current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union employees and union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the Class Period.

"Class Member" means a member of the Class.

"Class Period" means the period from September 26, 2018 through [October 11, 2023 or the date on which the Court grants preliminary approval of the Settlement, whichever is earlier].

"Class Settlement" means the settlement and resolution of all Released Class Claims.

"National Pipe Line Agreements" means the Collective Bargaining Agreements ("CBAs") that cover Defendant's employees who are members of the International Union of Operating Engineers ("IUOE"), the International Brotherhood of Teamsters ("IBT"), and the Laborers' International Union of North America ("LIUNA").

"PAGA Employees" means all current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union and union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the PAGA Period.

"PAGA Period" means the period from September 22, 2021 through [October 11, 2023 or the date on which the Court grants preliminary approval of the Settlement, whichever is earlier].

"PAGA Settlement" means the settlement and resolution of all Released PAGA Claims.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE ACTION

On September 22, 2022, Plaintiff provided written notice to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA") and Defendant of the specific provisions of the California Labor Code that Plaintiff contends were violated ("PAGA Letter"). On September 26, 2022, Plaintiff commenced a putative class action lawsuit by filing a Class Action Complaint for Damages in the Santa Clara County Superior Court, Case No. 22CV403427. On November 28, 2022, Plaintiff filed a First Amended Class Action Complaint for Damages and Enforcement Action Under the Private Attorneys General Act, California Labor Code §§ 2698 Et Seq. ("Operative Complaint"), adding a cause of action under the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 pursuant to California Labor Code Section 2698, *et seq.* ("PAGA").

Plaintiff contends that Defendant failed to properly pay minimum and overtime wages, provide compliant meal and rest breaks and associated premiums, timely pay wages upon termination of employment and associated waiting-time penalties, provide accurate wage statements, and reimburse business expenses, and thereby engaged in unfair business practices in violation of the California Business and Professions Code section 17200, *et seq.*, and conduct that gives rise to penalties under PAGA. Plaintiff seeks, among other things, recovery of unpaid wages and meal and rest period premiums, unreimbursed business expenses, restitution, penalties, interest, and attorneys' fees and costs.

Defendant denies all of the allegations in the Action or that it violated any law.

The Parties participated in mediation with a respected class action mediator, and as a result, the Parties reached a settlement. The Parties have since entered into a Joint Stipulation of Class Action and PAGA Settlement ("Settlement" or "Settlement Agreement").

On [Date of Preliminary Approval], the Court entered an order preliminarily approving the Settlement. The Court has appointed ILYM Group, Inc. as the administrator of the Settlement ("Settlement Administrator"), Plaintiff Michael Bravo as representative of the Class ("Class Representative"), and the following Plaintiff's attorneys as counsel for the Class ("Class Counsel"):

Jonathan M. Genish
Miriam L. Schimmel
Joana Fang
Alexandra Rose
Blackstone Law, APC
8383 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 745
Beverly Hills, California 90211
Tel: (310) 622-4278 / Fax: (855) 786-6356

If you are a Class Member, you need not take any action to receive an Individual Settlement Payment, but you have the opportunity to request exclusion from the Class Settlement (in which case you will not receive an Individual Settlement Payment), object to the Class Settlement, and/or dispute the Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks credited to you, if you so choose, as explained more fully in Sections III and IV below. If you are a PAGA Employee, you do not need to take any action to receive an Individual PAGA Payment; you will not have the opportunity to object or seek exclusion from the PAGA Settlement and all PAGA Employees will be bound to the PAGA Settlement if the Court grants final approval of the Settlement.

The Settlement represents a compromise and settlement of highly disputed claims. Nothing in the Settlement is intended or will be construed as an admission by Defendant that the claims in the Action have merit or that Defendant has any liability to Plaintiff, Class Members, or PAGA Employees. Plaintiff and Defendant, and their respective counsel, have concluded and agree that, in light of the risks and uncertainties to each side of continued litigation, the Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate, and is in the best interests of the Class Members, the State of California, and PAGA Employees.

III. SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT

A. Settlement Formula

The total gross settlement amount is One Million, Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$1,750,000.00) (the "Gross Settlement Amount"), subject to possible increase if it is determined that the number of workweeks exceeds a predetermined threshold. The portion of the Gross Settlement Amount that is available for payment to Class Members is referred to as the "Net Settlement Amount." The Net Settlement Amount will be the Gross Settlement Amount less the following payments which are subject to approval by the Court: (1) attorneys' fees, in an amount not to exceed 1/3 of the Gross Settlement Amount (i.e., \$583,333.00 if the Gross Settlement Amount is \$1,750,000.00), and reimbursement of litigation costs and expenses, in an amount not to exceed Thirteen Thousand Dollars (\$13,000.00) to Class Counsel; (2) Enhancement Payment in an amount not to exceed Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to Plaintiff for his services in the Action; (3) the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) allocated toward civil penalties under the Private Attorneys General Act ("PAGA Amount"), of which the LWDA will be paid 75% (i.e., \$150,000.00) ("LWDA Payment") and the remaining 25% (\$50,000.00) will be distributed to PAGA Employees ("PAGA Employee Amount"); and (4) Settlement Administration

Costs in an amount not to exceed Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$8,500.00) to the Settlement Administrator.

Class Members are eligible to receive payment under the Class Settlement of their *pro rata* share of the Net Settlement Amount (“Individual Settlement Share”) based on the number of weeks each Class Member was employed by Defendant as an hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union or union employee covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements in California during the Class Period (“Workweeks”). The Settlement Administrator has divided the Net Settlement Amount by the Workweeks of all Class Members to yield the “Estimated Workweek Value,” and multiplied each Class Member’s individual Workweeks by the Estimated Workweek Value to yield an estimated Individual Settlement Share that each Class Member may be entitled to receive under the Class Settlement (which is listed in Section III.C below). Class Members who do not submit a timely and valid Request for Exclusion (“Settlement Class Members”) will be issued their final Individual Settlement Payment.

Each Individual Settlement Share will be allocated as twenty percent (20%) as wages, which will be reported on an IRS Form W-2, and eighty percent (80%) as penalties, interest, and non-wage damages, which will be reported on an IRS Form 1099 (if applicable). Each Individual Settlement Share will be subject to reduction for the employee’s share of payroll taxes and withholdings with respect to the wages portion of the Individual Settlement Shares resulting in a net payment to the Settlement Class Member (“Individual Settlement Payment”). The employer’s share of taxes and contributions in connection with the wages portion of Individual Settlement Shares (“Employer Taxes”) will be paid by Defendant separately and in addition to the Gross Settlement Amount.

PAGA Employees are eligible to receive payment under the PAGA Settlement of their *pro rata* share of the PAGA Employee Amount (“Individual PAGA Payment”) based on the number of weeks each PAGA Employee was employed by Defendant as an hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union or union employee covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements in California during the PAGA Period (“PAGA Workweeks”). The Settlement Administrator had divided the PAGA Employee Amount, i.e., 25% of the PAGA Amount, by the PAGA Workweeks of all PAGA Employees to yield the “PAGA Workweek Value,” and multiplied each PAGA Employee’s individual PAGA Workweeks by the PAGA Workweek Value to yield each PAGA Employee’s Individual PAGA Payment.

Each Individual PAGA Payment will be allocated as one hundred percent (100%) penalties, will not be subject to taxes or withholdings, and will be reported on IRS Form 1099 (if applicable).

If the Court grants final approval of the Settlement, Individual Settlement Payments will be mailed to Settlement Class Members and Individual PAGA Payments will be mailed to PAGA Employees at the address that is on file with the Settlement Administrator. **If the address to which this Class Notice was mailed is not correct, or if you move after you receive this Class Notice, you must provide your correct mailing address to the Settlement Administrator as soon as possible to ensure you receive any payment that you may be entitled to under the Settlement.**

B. Your Workweeks and PAGA Workweeks (if applicable) Based on Defendant’s Records

According to Defendant’s records:

- From September 26, 2018 through **[October 11, 2023 or the date on which the Court grants preliminary approval of the Settlement, whichever is earlier]** (i.e., the Class Period), you were employed by Defendant for **[]** Workweeks.
- From September 22, 2021 through **[October 11, 2023 or the date on which the Court grants preliminary approval of the Settlement, whichever is earlier]** (i.e., the PAGA Period), you were employed by Defendant for **[]** PAGA Workweeks.

If you wish to dispute the Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks credited to you, you must submit your dispute in writing to the Settlement Administrator (“Workweeks Dispute”). The Workweeks Dispute must: (a) contain the case name and number of the Action (*Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.*, Case No. 22CV403427); (b) contain the your full name, signature, address, telephone number, and the last four (4) digits of your Social Security number; (c) clearly state that you dispute the number of Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks credited to you and what you contend is the correct number; and (f) be returned by mail to the Settlement Administrator at the specified address listed in Section IV.B below, postmarked **on or before [Response Deadline]**.

C. Your Estimated Individual Settlement Share and Individual PAGA Payment (if applicable)

As explained above, your estimated Individual Settlement Share and Individual PAGA Payment (if applicable) is based on the number of Workweeks and PAGA Workweeks (if applicable) credited to you.

Under the terms of the Settlement, your Individual Settlement Share is estimated to be \$ [REDACTED]. The Individual Settlement Share is subject to reduction for the employee's share of taxes and withholdings with respect to the wages portion of the Individual Settlement Share and will only be distributed if the Court approves the Settlement and after the Settlement goes into effect.

Under the terms of the Settlement, your Individual PAGA Payment is estimated to be \$ [REDACTED] and will only be distributed if the Court approves the Settlement and after the Settlement goes into effect.

The settlement approval process may take multiple months. Your Individual Settlement Share and Individual PAGA Payment (if applicable) reflected in this Class Notice is only an estimate. Your actual Individual Settlement Payment and Individual PAGA Payment (if applicable) may be higher or lower.

D. Release of Claims

Upon the full funding of the Gross Settlement Amount, Plaintiff and all Settlement Class Members will be deemed to have fully, finally, and forever released, settled, compromised, relinquished, and discharged the Released Parties of all Released Class Claims.

Upon the full funding of the Gross Settlement Amount, Plaintiff, the State of California with respect to all PAGA Employees, and all PAGA Employees will be deemed to have fully, finally, and forever released, settled, compromised, relinquished, and discharged the Released Parties of all Released PAGA Claims.

“Released Class Claims” means any and all claims, debts, liabilities, demands, obligations, guarantees, costs, expenses, attorneys’ fees, damages, or causes of action which were alleged or which could have been alleged based on the factual allegations in the Operative Complaint, arising during the Class Period, under any federal, state, or local law, and shall specifically include claims for Defendant’s alleged failure to pay overtime and minimum wages, provide compliant meal and rest periods and associated premium payments, timely pay wages upon termination, provide accurate wage statements, and reimburse necessary business-related expenses in violation of California Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 226(a), 226.7, 510, 512(a), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800, and 2802, and Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders, and all claims for attorneys’ fees and costs and statutory interest in connection therewith, California Business and Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.*, and any other claims, including claims for statutory penalties, pertaining to the Class Members.

“Released PAGA Claims” means any and all claims arising from any of the factual allegations in the PAGA Letter, arising during the PAGA Period, for civil penalties under the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, California Labor Code sections 2698 *et seq.*, including all claims for attorneys’ fees and costs related thereto, for Defendant’s alleged failure to pay overtime and minimum wages, provide compliant meal and rest periods and associated premium payments, timely pay wages during employment and upon termination, provide complaint wage statements, maintain complete and accurate payroll records, and reimburse necessary business-related expenses in violation of California Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 226(a), 226.7, 510, 512(a), 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800, and 2802, and Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders, including *inter alia*, Wage Order 16-2001.

“Released Parties” means Defendant and its current and former officers, directors, members, insurers, shareholders, subsidiaries, affiliates, predecessors, successors, and assigns.

E. Attorneys’ Fees and Costs to Class Counsel

Class Counsel will seek attorneys’ fees in an amount not to exceed one-third (1/3) of the Gross Settlement Amount (i.e., \$583,333.33 if the Gross Settlement Amount is \$1,750,000.00) and reimbursement of litigation costs and expenses in an amount not to exceed Thirteen Thousand Dollars (\$13,000.00) (collectively, “Attorneys’ Fees and Costs”), subject to approval by the Court. The Attorneys’ Fees and Costs granted by the Court will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount. Class Counsel has been prosecuting the Action on behalf of Plaintiff, Class Members, and PAGA Employees on a contingency fee basis (that is, without being paid any money to date) and has been paying all litigation costs and expenses.

F. Enhancement Payment to Plaintiff

Plaintiff will seek the amount of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) (“Enhancement Payment”), in recognition of his services in connection with the Action. The Enhancement Payment will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, subject to approval by the Court, and if awarded, it will be paid to Plaintiff in addition to his Individual Settlement Payment and Individual PAGA Payment that he is entitled to under the Settlement.

G. Settlement Administration Costs to Settlement Administrator

Payment to the Settlement Administrator is estimated not to exceed Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$8,500.00) (“Settlement Administration Costs”) for the costs of the notice and settlement administration process, including and not limited to, the expense of notifying the Class Members of the Settlement, processing Requests for Exclusion, Notices of Objection, and Workweeks Disputes, calculating Individual Settlement Shares, Individual Settlement Payments, and Individual PAGA Payments, and distributing payments and tax forms under the Settlement, and shall be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, subject to approval by the Court.

IV. WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AND OPTIONS AS A CLASS MEMBER?

A. Participate in the Settlement

If you want to participate in the Class Settlement and receive money from the Class Settlement, you do not have to do anything. You will automatically be included in the Class Settlement and issued your Individual Settlement Payment unless you decide to exclude yourself from the Class Settlement.

Unless you elect to exclude yourself from the Class Settlement, you will be bound by the terms of the Class Settlement and any judgment that may be entered by the Court based thereon, and you will release the Released Class Claims against the Released Parties as described in Section III.D above.

If you are a PAGA Employee, you will automatically be included in the PAGA Settlement and issued your Individual PAGA Payment. This means you will be bound by the terms of the PAGA Settlement and any judgment that may be entered by the Court based thereon, and you will release the Released PAGA Claims against the Released Parties as described in Section III.D above.

As a Class Member and PAGA Employee (if applicable), you will not be separately responsible for the payment of attorney’s fees or litigation costs and expenses, unless you retain your own counsel, in which event you will be responsible for your own attorney’s fees and expenses.

B. Request Exclusion from the Class Settlement

Class Members may request to be excluded from the Class Settlement by submitting a letter (“Request for Exclusion”) to the Settlement Administrator, at the following address:

[Settlement Administrator]
[Mailing Address]

A Request for Exclusion must: (a) contain the case name and number of the Action (*Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.*, Case No. 22CV403427); (b) contain your full name, signature, address, telephone number, and last four (4) digits of your Social Security number; (c) clearly state that you do not wish to be included in the Class Settlement; and (d) be returned by mail to the Settlement Administrator at the specified address above, postmarked **on or before** [Response Deadline].

If the Court grants final approval of the Settlement, any Class Member who submits a timely and valid Request for Exclusion will not be issued an Individual Settlement Payment, will not be bound by the Class Settlement (and the release of Released Class Claims described in Section III.D above), and will not have any right to object to, appeal, or comment on the Class Settlement. Class Members who do not submit a timely and valid Request for Exclusion will be deemed Settlement Class Members and will be bound by all terms of the Class Settlement, including those pertaining to the release of claims described in Section III.D above, as well as any judgment that may be entered by the Court based thereon. PAGA Employees will be bound to the PAGA Settlement (and the release of Released PAGA Claims described in Section III.D above) and will still be issued an Individual PAGA Payment, irrespective of whether they submit a Request for Exclusion.

C. Object to the Class Settlement

You can object to the Class Settlement as long as you have not submitted a Request for Exclusion by submitting a written objection (“Notice of Objection”) to the Settlement Administrator.

The Notice of Objection must: (a) contain the case name and number of the Action (*Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.*, Case No. 22CV403427); (b) contain your full name, signature, address, telephone number, and the last four (4) digits of your Social Security number; (c) contain a written statement of all grounds for the objection accompanied by any legal support for such objection; (d) contain copies of any papers, briefs, or other documents upon which the objection is based; and (e) be returned by mail to the Settlement Administrator at the specified address listed in Section IV.B above, postmarked **on or before [Response Deadline]**.

You may also appear at the Final Approval Hearing at your expense, either in person, telephonically, or through an attorney, provided you notify the Court of your intention to do so.

V. FINAL APPROVAL HEARING

The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing in Department 19 of the Santa Clara County Superior Court, located at 161 North First Street, San Jose, California 95113, on **[date]**, at **[time]**, to determine whether the Settlement should be finally approved as fair, reasonable, and adequate. The Court also will be asked to approve and grant the Attorneys’ Fees and Costs to Class Counsel, Enhancement Payment to Plaintiff, and Settlement Administration Costs to the Settlement Administrator.

The Final Approval Hearing may be continued without further notice to the Class Members and PAGA Employees. It is not necessary for you to appear at the Final Approval Hearing, although you may appear if you wish to.

Class Members may appear at the Final Approval Hearing remotely using the Microsoft Teams link for Department 19 (Afternoon Session). Instructions for appearing remotely are provided at https://www.sccscourt.org/general_info/ra_teams/video_hearings_teams.shtml and should be reviewed in advance. Class Members who wish to appear remotely are encouraged to contact Class Counsel at least three days before the hearing if possible, so that potential technology or audibility issues can be avoided or minimize.

VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The above is a summary of the basic terms of the Settlement. For the precise terms and conditions of the Settlement Agreement, you should review the detailed Settlement Agreement and other papers, which are on file with the Court.

You may view the Settlement Agreement and other documents filed in the Action (a) online on the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara’s Website at <https://www.sccscourt.org/>, or (b) in person at Records, Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, 161 North First Street, San Jose, California 95113, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding Court holidays and closures, or you may contact Class Counsel or the Settlement Administrator.

You may also visit the Settlement Administrator’s website at **[redacted]** for key documents in the Action.

PLEASE DO NOT TELEPHONE THE COURT OR THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THIS SETTLEMENT.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, YOU MAY CALL THE SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATOR AT THE FOLLOWING TOLL-FREE NUMBER: **[INSERT], OR YOU MAY ALSO CONTACT CLASS COUNSEL.**

EXHIBIT 2

AMENDMENT NO. 1 TO
JOINT STIPULATION OF CLASS ACTION AND PAGA SETTLEMENT

This Amendment No. 1 to Joint Stipulation of Class Action and PAGA Settlement is entered into between Plaintiff Michael Bravo (“Plaintiff”) and Defendant Michels Pacific Energy, Inc. (“Defendant”) (together, the “Parties”) pursuant to Paragraph 45 of the Joint Stipulation of Class Action and PAGA Settlement (“Original Agreement”) entered into between the Parties on September 19, 2023.

A. Paragraph 34 of the Original Agreement is hereby amended to state as follows:

Settlement Checks. The Settlement Administrator will be responsible for undertaking appropriate deductions, required tax reporting, and issuing the Individual Settlement Payments by way of check to the Settlement Class Members and the Individual PAGA Payments by way of check to the PAGA Employees in accordance with this Settlement Agreement. When issuing payments, the Settlement Administrator may combine the Individual Settlement Payment and Individual PAGA Payment into one check if the intended recipient for both payments is one individual. Settlement Class Members and PAGA Employees are not required to submit a claim to be issued an Individual Settlement Payment and/or Individual PAGA Payment. Each Individual Settlement Payment and Individual PAGA Payment check will be valid and negotiable for one hundred and eighty (180) calendar days from the date the checks are issued, and thereafter, shall be canceled. Any funds associated with such canceled checks shall be distributed by the Settlement Administrator to California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (the proposed *cy pres* recipient) in accordance with California Code of Civil Procedure Section 384. The Parties and their counsel each represent that they do not have any financial interest in, or otherwise have a relationship with, the proposed *cy pres* recipient that could create a conflict of interest. The Settlement Administrator shall undertake amended and/or supplemental tax filings and reporting required under applicable local, state, and federal tax laws that are necessitated due to the cancelation of any Individual Settlement Payment and/or Individual PAGA Payment checks. To the extent that the Settlement Administrator is able to obtain or receive the return or refund of the amounts that were transmitted to taxing authorities for the employees’ share of taxes, contributions, and/or withholding associated with canceled Individual Settlement Payments, all such

1 amounts shall also be transmitted to California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. Settlement Class
2 Members whose Individual Settlement Payment checks are canceled shall, nevertheless, be bound by
3 the Class Settlement, and PAGA Employees whose Individual PAGA Payment checks are cancelled
4 shall, nevertheless, be bound by the PAGA Settlement.

5 **B. The Notice of Class Action Settlement attached to the Original Agreement as “Exhibit**
6 **A” is hereby replaced with the revised Notice of Class Action Settlement attached**
7 **hereto as “Exhibit A.”**

8 **BLACKSTONE LAW, APC**

9 

10 Dated: March 11, 2024

11

Jonathan M. Genish
12 *Attorneys for Plaintiff Michael Bravo*

13 **EIMER STAHL LLP**

14 

15 Dated: March 11, 2024

16

Robert E. Dunn
17 *Attorneys for Defendant Michels Pacific Energy,*
18 *Inc.*

EXHIBIT A

NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.
Superior Court of California for the County of Santa Clara, Case No. 22CV403427

PLEASE READ THIS CLASS NOTICE CAREFULLY.

You have received this Class Notice because Defendant's records indicate that you may be eligible to take part in the class action settlement reached in the above-referenced case.

You do not need to take any action to receive a settlement payment.

This Class Notice is designed to advise you of your rights and options with respect to the settlement, and how you can request to be excluded from the Class Settlement, object to the Class Settlement, and/or dispute the number of Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks that you are credited with, if you so choose.

YOU ARE NOTIFIED THAT: A class and representative action settlement has been reached between Plaintiff Michael Bravo ("Plaintiff") and Defendant Michels Pacific Energy, Inc. ("Defendant") (Plaintiff and Defendant are collectively referred to as the "Parties") in the case entitled *Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.*, Santa Clara County Superior Court, Case No. 22CV403427 ("Action"), which may affect your legal rights. On [date of Preliminary Approval], the Court granted preliminary approval of the settlement and scheduled a hearing on [hearing date] at [hearing time] ("Final Approval Hearing") to determine whether or not the Court should grant final approval of the settlement.

I. IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

"Class" means all current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union employees and union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the Class Period.

"Class Member" means a member of the Class.

"Class Period" means the period from September 26, 2018 through October 11, 2023.

"Class Settlement" means the settlement and resolution of all Released Class Claims.

"National Pipe Line Agreements" means the Collective Bargaining Agreements ("CBAs") that cover Defendant's employees who are members of the International Union of Operating Engineers ("IUOE"), the International Brotherhood of Teamsters ("IBT"), and the Laborers' International Union of North America ("LIUNA").

"PAGA Employees" means all current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union and union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the PAGA Period.

"PAGA Period" means the period from September 22, 2021 through October 11, 2023.

"PAGA Settlement" means the settlement and resolution of all Released PAGA Claims.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE ACTION

On September 22, 2022, Plaintiff provided written notice to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA") and Defendant of the specific provisions of the California Labor Code that Plaintiff contends were violated ("PAGA Letter"). On September 26, 2022, Plaintiff commenced a putative class action lawsuit by filing a Class Action Complaint for Damages in the Santa Clara County Superior Court, Case No. 22CV403427. On November 28, 2022, Plaintiff filed a First Amended Class Action Complaint for Damages and Enforcement Action Under the Private Attorneys General Act, California Labor Code §§ 2698 Et Seq. ("Operative Complaint"), adding a cause of action under the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 pursuant to California Labor Code Section 2698, *et seq.* ("PAGA").

Plaintiff contends that Defendant failed to properly pay minimum and overtime wages, provide compliant meal and rest breaks and associated premiums, timely pay wages upon termination of employment and associated waiting-time penalties,

provide accurate wage statements, and reimburse business expenses, and thereby engaged in unfair business practices in violation of the California Business and Professions Code section 17200, *et seq.*, and conduct that gives rise to penalties under PAGA. Plaintiff seeks, among other things, recovery of unpaid wages and meal and rest period premiums, unreimbursed business expenses, restitution, penalties, interest, and attorneys' fees and costs.

Defendant denies all of the allegations in the Action or that it violated any law.

The Parties participated in mediation with a respected class action mediator, and as a result, the Parties reached a settlement. The Parties have since entered into a Joint Stipulation of Class Action and PAGA Settlement ("Settlement" or "Settlement Agreement").

On [Date of Preliminary Approval], the Court entered an order preliminarily approving the Settlement. The Court has appointed ILYM Group, Inc. as the administrator of the Settlement ("Settlement Administrator"), Plaintiff Michael Bravo as representative of the Class ("Class Representative"), and the following Plaintiff's attorneys as counsel for the Class ("Class Counsel"):

Jonathan M. Genish
Miriam L. Schimmel
Joana Fang
Alexandra Rose
Blackstone Law, APC
8383 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 745
Beverly Hills, California 90211
Tel: (310) 622-4278 / Fax: (855) 786-6356

If you are a Class Member, you need not take any action to receive an Individual Settlement Payment, but you have the opportunity to request exclusion from the Class Settlement (in which case you will not receive an Individual Settlement Payment), object to the Class Settlement, and/or dispute the Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks credited to you, if you so choose, as explained more fully in Sections III and IV below. If you are a PAGA Employee, you do not need to take any action to receive an Individual PAGA Payment; you will not have the opportunity to object or seek exclusion from the PAGA Settlement and all PAGA Employees will be bound to the PAGA Settlement if the Court grants final approval of the Settlement.

The Settlement represents a compromise and settlement of highly disputed claims. Nothing in the Settlement is intended or will be construed as an admission by Defendant that the claims in the Action have merit or that Defendant has any liability to Plaintiff, Class Members, or PAGA Employees. Plaintiff and Defendant, and their respective counsel, have concluded and agree that, in light of the risks and uncertainties to each side of continued litigation, the Settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate, and is in the best interests of the Class Members, the State of California, and PAGA Employees.

III. SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT

A. Settlement Formula

The total gross settlement amount is One Million, Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$1,750,000.00) (the "Gross Settlement Amount"), subject to possible increase if it is determined that the number of workweeks exceeds a predetermined threshold. The portion of the Gross Settlement Amount that is available for payment to Class Members is referred to as the "Net Settlement Amount." The Net Settlement Amount will be the Gross Settlement Amount less the following payments which are subject to approval by the Court: (1) attorneys' fees, in an amount not to exceed 1/3 of the Gross Settlement Amount (i.e., \$583,333.00 if the Gross Settlement Amount is \$1,750,000.00), and reimbursement of litigation costs and expenses, in an amount not to exceed Thirteen Thousand Dollars (\$13,000.00) to Class Counsel; (2) Enhancement Payment in an amount not to exceed Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to Plaintiff for his services in the Action; (3) the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000.00) allocated toward civil penalties under the Private Attorneys General Act ("PAGA Amount"), of which the LWDA will be paid 75% (i.e., \$150,000.00) ("LWDA Payment") and the remaining 25% (\$50,000.00) will be distributed to PAGA Employees ("PAGA Employee Amount"); and (4) Settlement Administration Costs in an amount not to exceed Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$8,500.00) to the Settlement Administrator.

Class Members are eligible to receive payment under the Class Settlement of their *pro rata* share of the Net Settlement Amount (“Individual Settlement Share”) based on the number of weeks each Class Member was employed by Defendant as an hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union or union employee covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements in California during the Class Period (“Workweeks”). The Settlement Administrator has divided the Net Settlement Amount by the Workweeks of all Class Members to yield the “Estimated Workweek Value,” and multiplied each Class Member’s individual Workweeks by the Estimated Workweek Value to yield an estimated Individual Settlement Share that each Class Member may be entitled to receive under the Class Settlement (which is listed in Section III.C below). Class Members who do not submit a timely and valid Request for Exclusion (“Settlement Class Members”) will be issued their final Individual Settlement Payment.

Each Individual Settlement Share will be allocated as twenty percent (20%) as wages, which will be reported on an IRS Form W-2, and eighty percent (80%) as penalties, interest, and non-wage damages, which will be reported on an IRS Form 1099 (if applicable). Each Individual Settlement Share will be subject to reduction for the employee’s share of payroll taxes and withholdings with respect to the wages portion of the Individual Settlement Shares resulting in a net payment to the Settlement Class Member (“Individual Settlement Payment”). The employer’s share of taxes and contributions in connection with the wages portion of Individual Settlement Shares (“Employer Taxes”) will be paid by Defendant separately and in addition to the Gross Settlement Amount.

PAGA Employees are eligible to receive payment under the PAGA Settlement of their *pro rata* share of the PAGA Employee Amount (“Individual PAGA Payment”) based on the number of weeks each PAGA Employee was employed by Defendant as an hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union or union employee covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements in California during the PAGA Period (“PAGA Workweeks”). The Settlement Administrator had divided the PAGA Employee Amount, i.e., 25% of the PAGA Amount, by the PAGA Workweeks of all PAGA Employees to yield the “PAGA Workweek Value,” and multiplied each PAGA Employee’s individual PAGA Workweeks by the PAGA Workweek Value to yield each PAGA Employee’s Individual PAGA Payment.

Each Individual PAGA Payment will be allocated as one hundred percent (100%) penalties, will not be subject to taxes or withholdings, and will be reported on IRS Form 1099 (if applicable).

If the Court grants final approval of the Settlement, Individual Settlement Payments will be mailed to Settlement Class Members and Individual PAGA Payments will be mailed to PAGA Employees at the address that is on file with the Settlement Administrator. **If the address to which this Class Notice was mailed is not correct, or if you move after you receive this Class Notice, you must provide your correct mailing address to the Settlement Administrator as soon as possible to ensure you receive any payment that you may be entitled to under the Settlement.**

B. Your Workweeks and PAGA Workweeks (if applicable) Based on Defendant’s Records

According to Defendant’s records:

- **From September 26, 2018 through October 11, 2023 (i.e., the Class Period), you were employed by Defendant for [REDACTED] Workweeks.**
- **From September 22, 2021 through October 11, 2023 (i.e., the PAGA Period), you were employed by Defendant for [REDACTED] PAGA Workweeks.**

If you wish to dispute the Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks credited to you, you must submit your dispute in writing to the Settlement Administrator (“Workweeks Dispute”). The Workweeks Dispute must: (a) contain the case name and number of the Action (*Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.*, Case No. 22CV403427); (b) contain the your full name, signature, address, telephone number, and the last four (4) digits of your Social Security number; (c) clearly state that you dispute the number of Workweeks and/or PAGA Workweeks credited to you and what you contend is the correct number; and (f) be returned by mail to the Settlement Administrator at the specified address listed in Section IV.B below, postmarked **on or before [Response Deadline]**.

C. Your Estimated Individual Settlement Share and Individual PAGA Payment (if applicable)

As explained above, your estimated Individual Settlement Share and Individual PAGA Payment (if applicable) is based on the number of Workweeks and PAGA Workweeks (if applicable) credited to you.

Under the terms of the Settlement, your Individual Settlement Share is estimated to be \$ [REDACTED]. The Individual Settlement Share is subject to reduction for the employee's share of taxes and withholdings with respect to the wages portion of the Individual Settlement Share and will only be distributed if the Court approves the Settlement and after the Settlement goes into effect.

Under the terms of the Settlement, your Individual PAGA Payment is estimated to be \$ [REDACTED] and will only be distributed if the Court approves the Settlement and after the Settlement goes into effect.

The settlement approval process may take multiple months. Your Individual Settlement Share and Individual PAGA Payment (if applicable) reflected in this Class Notice is only an estimate. Your actual Individual Settlement Payment and Individual PAGA Payment (if applicable) may be higher or lower.

D. Release of Claims

Upon the full funding of the Gross Settlement Amount, Plaintiff and all Settlement Class Members will be deemed to have fully, finally, and forever released, settled, compromised, relinquished, and discharged the Released Parties of all Released Class Claims.

Upon the full funding of the Gross Settlement Amount, Plaintiff, the State of California with respect to all PAGA Employees, and all PAGA Employees will be deemed to have fully, finally, and forever released, settled, compromised, relinquished, and discharged the Released Parties of all Released PAGA Claims.

“Released Class Claims” means any and all claims, debts, liabilities, demands, obligations, guarantees, costs, expenses, attorneys’ fees, damages, or causes of action which were alleged or which could have been alleged based on the factual allegations in the Operative Complaint, arising during the Class Period, under any federal, state, or local law, and shall specifically include claims for Defendant’s alleged failure to pay overtime and minimum wages, provide compliant meal and rest periods and associated premium payments, timely pay wages upon termination, provide accurate wage statements, and reimburse necessary business-related expenses in violation of California Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 226(a), 226.7, 510, 512(a), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800, and 2802, and Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders, and all claims for attorneys’ fees and costs and statutory interest in connection therewith, California Business and Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.*, and any other claims, including claims for statutory penalties, pertaining to the Class Members.

“Released PAGA Claims” means any and all claims arising from any of the factual allegations in the PAGA Letter, arising during the PAGA Period, for civil penalties under the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, California Labor Code sections 2698 *et seq.*, including all claims for attorneys’ fees and costs related thereto, for Defendant’s alleged failure to pay overtime and minimum wages, provide compliant meal and rest periods and associated premium payments, timely pay wages during employment and upon termination, provide complaint wage statements, maintain complete and accurate payroll records, and reimburse necessary business-related expenses in violation of California Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 226(a), 226.7, 510, 512(a), 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800, and 2802, and Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders, including *inter alia*, Wage Order 16-2001.

“Released Parties” means Defendant and its current and former officers, directors, members, insurers, shareholders, subsidiaries, affiliates, predecessors, successors, and assigns.

E. Attorneys’ Fees and Costs to Class Counsel

Class Counsel will seek attorneys’ fees in an amount not to exceed one-third (1/3) of the Gross Settlement Amount (i.e., \$583,333.33 if the Gross Settlement Amount is \$1,750,000.00) and reimbursement of litigation costs and expenses in an amount not to exceed Thirteen Thousand Dollars (\$13,000.00) (collectively, “Attorneys’ Fees and Costs”), subject to approval by the Court. The Attorneys’ Fees and Costs granted by the Court will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount. Class Counsel has been prosecuting the Action on behalf of Plaintiff, Class Members, and PAGA Employees on a contingency fee basis (that is, without being paid any money to date) and has been paying all litigation costs and expenses.

F. Enhancement Payment to Plaintiff

Plaintiff will seek the amount of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) (“Enhancement Payment”), in recognition of his services in connection with the Action. The Enhancement Payment will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, subject to approval by the Court, and if awarded, it will be paid to Plaintiff in addition to his Individual Settlement Payment and Individual PAGA Payment that he is entitled to under the Settlement.

G. Settlement Administration Costs to Settlement Administrator

Payment to the Settlement Administrator is estimated not to exceed Eight Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$8,500.00) (“Settlement Administration Costs”) for the costs of the notice and settlement administration process, including and not limited to, the expense of notifying the Class Members of the Settlement, processing Requests for Exclusion, Notices of Objection, and Workweeks Disputes, calculating Individual Settlement Shares, Individual Settlement Payments, and Individual PAGA Payments, and distributing payments and tax forms under the Settlement, and shall be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, subject to approval by the Court.

IV. WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AND OPTIONS AS A CLASS MEMBER?

A. Participate in the Settlement

If you want to participate in the Class Settlement and receive money from the Class Settlement, you do not have to do anything. You will automatically be included in the Class Settlement and issued your Individual Settlement Payment unless you decide to exclude yourself from the Class Settlement.

Unless you elect to exclude yourself from the Class Settlement, you will be bound by the terms of the Class Settlement and any judgment that may be entered by the Court based thereon, and you will release the Released Class Claims against the Released Parties as described in Section III.D above.

If you are a PAGA Employee, you will automatically be included in the PAGA Settlement and issued your Individual PAGA Payment. This means you will be bound by the terms of the PAGA Settlement and any judgment that may be entered by the Court based thereon, and you will release the Released PAGA Claims against the Released Parties as described in Section III.D above.

As a Class Member and PAGA Employee (if applicable), you will not be separately responsible for the payment of attorney’s fees or litigation costs and expenses, unless you retain your own counsel, in which event you will be responsible for your own attorney’s fees and expenses.

B. Request Exclusion from the Class Settlement

Class Members may request to be excluded from the Class Settlement by submitting a letter (“Request for Exclusion”) to the Settlement Administrator, at the following address:

[Settlement Administrator]
[Mailing Address]

A Request for Exclusion must: (a) contain the case name and number of the Action (*Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.*, Case No. 22CV403427); (b) contain your full name, signature, address, telephone number, and last four (4) digits of your Social Security number; (c) clearly state that you do not wish to be included in the Class Settlement; and (d) be returned by mail to the Settlement Administrator at the specified address above, postmarked **on or before [Response Deadline]**.

If the Court grants final approval of the Settlement, any Class Member who submits a timely and valid Request for Exclusion will not be issued an Individual Settlement Payment, will not be bound by the Class Settlement (and the release of Released Class Claims described in Section III.D above), and will not have any right to object to, appeal, or comment on the Class Settlement. Class Members who do not submit a timely and valid Request for Exclusion will be deemed Settlement Class Members and will be bound by all terms of the Class Settlement, including those pertaining to the release of claims described in Section III.D above, as well as any judgment that may be entered by the Court based thereon. PAGA Employees will be bound to the PAGA Settlement (and the release of Released PAGA Claims described in Section III.D above) and will still be issued an Individual PAGA Payment, irrespective of whether they submit a Request for Exclusion.

C. Object to the Class Settlement

You can object to the Class Settlement as long as you have not submitted a Request for Exclusion by submitting a written objection (“Notice of Objection”) to the Settlement Administrator.

The Notice of Objection must: (a) contain the case name and number of the Action (*Michael Bravo v. Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.*, Case No. 22CV403427); (b) contain your full name, signature, address, telephone number, and the last four (4) digits of your Social Security number; (c) contain a written statement of all grounds for the objection accompanied by any legal support for such objection; (d) contain copies of any papers, briefs, or other documents upon which the objection is based; and (e) be returned by mail to the Settlement Administrator at the specified address listed in Section IV.B above, postmarked **on or before [Response Deadline]**.

You may also appear at the Final Approval Hearing at your expense, either in person, telephonically, or through an attorney, and present your objection orally, regardless of whether you have submitted a Notice of Objection.

V. FINAL APPROVAL HEARING

The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing in Department 19 of the Santa Clara County Superior Court, located at 161 North First Street, San Jose, California 95113, on **[date]**, at **[time]**, to determine whether the Settlement should be finally approved as fair, reasonable, and adequate. The Court also will be asked to approve and grant the Attorneys’ Fees and Costs to Class Counsel, Enhancement Payment to Plaintiff, and Settlement Administration Costs to the Settlement Administrator.

The Final Approval Hearing may be continued without further notice to the Class Members and PAGA Employees. It is not necessary for you to appear at the Final Approval Hearing, although you may appear if you wish to.

Class Members may appear at the Final Approval Hearing in person or remotely using the Microsoft Teams link for Department 19 (Afternoon Session). Instructions for appearing remotely are provided at https://www.sccscourt.org/general_info/ra_teams/video_hearings_teams.shtml and should be reviewed in advance. Class Members who wish to appear remotely are encouraged to contact Class Counsel at least three days before the hearing if possible, so that potential technology or audibility issues can be avoided or minimize.

VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The above is a summary of the basic terms of the Settlement. For the precise terms and conditions of the Settlement Agreement, you should review the detailed Settlement Agreement and other papers, which are on file with the Court.

You may view the Settlement Agreement and other documents filed in the Action (a) online on the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara’s Website at <https://www.sccscourt.org/>, or (b) in person at Records, Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, 161 North First Street, San Jose, California 95113, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding Court holidays and closures, or you may contact Class Counsel or the Settlement Administrator.

You may also visit the Settlement Administrator’s website at **[redacted]** for key documents in the Action.

PLEASE DO NOT TELEPHONE THE COURT OR THE OFFICE OF THE CLERK FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THIS SETTLEMENT.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, YOU MAY CALL THE SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATOR AT THE FOLLOWING TOLL-FREE NUMBER: **[INSERT], OR YOU MAY ALSO CONTACT CLASS COUNSEL.**

EXHIBIT 3

1
2
3
4
5 **SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA**
6 **COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA**
7
8

9 MICHAEL BRAVO, individually and on behalf
10 of all others similarly situated,

11 Plaintiff,

12 vs.

13 MICHELS PACIFIC ENERGY, INC., a
14 Delaware corporation; and DOES 1 through 25,
15 inclusive,

16 Defendants.

Case No. 22CV403427

**ORDER RE: MOTION FOR
PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF
CLASS AND REPRESENTATIVE
ACTION SETTLEMENT**

17 The above-entitled matter came on for hearing on March 27, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. in
18 Department 19, the Honorable Theodore C. Zayner presiding. Having reviewed and considered
19 the written submissions filed by the parties, and having listened carefully to arguments of
20 counsel, the court rules as follows:

21 **I. INTRODUCTION**

22 This is a class and representative action arising out of alleged wage and hour violations.
23 The operative First Amended Class and PAGA Action Complaint ("FAC"), filed on November
24 28, 2022, sets forth the following causes of action: (1) Violation of Cal. Labor Code §§ 510 and
25 1198 (Unpaid Overtime); (2) Violation of Cal. Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512(a) (Unpaid Meal
26 Period Premiums); (3) Violation of Cal. Labor Code § 226.7 (Unpaid Rest Period Premiums);
27 (4) Violation of Cal. Labor Code §§ 1194, 1197 and 1197.1 (Unpaid Minimum Wages);
28 (5) Violation of Cal. Labor Code §§ 201, 202 and 203 (Final Wages Not Timely Paid);

(6) Violation of Cal. Labor Code § 226(a) (Failure to Provide Accurate Wage Statements); (7) Violation of Cal. Labor Code §§ 2800 and 2802 (Failure to Reimburse Necessary Business Expenses); (8) Violation of Cal. Business & Professions Code §§ 17200, et seq.; and (9) Violation of Cal. Labor Code §§ 2699, et seq. (Private Attorneys General Act).

The parties have reached a settlement. Plaintiff Michael Bravo (“Plaintiff”) moved for preliminary approval of the settlement. The motion was unopposed.

On February 28, 2024, the court continued the motion for preliminary approval of settlement to March 27, 2024. In its tentative ruling, the court directed Plaintiff to file a supplemental declaration identifying a new *cy pres* recipient, addressing the court’s concerns regarding the scope of the definitions for the class and PAGA Employees, and including an amended class notice.

On March 15, 2024, Plaintiff filed a supplemental declaration from his counsel in support of the motion for preliminary approval of settlement.

II. LEGAL STANDARD

Generally, “questions whether a settlement was fair and reasonable, whether notice to the class was adequate, whether certification of the class was proper, and whether the attorney fee award was proper are matters addressed to the trial court’s broad discretion.” (*Wershba v. Apple Computer, Inc.* (2001) 91 Cal.App.4th 224, 234-235 (*Wershba*), citing *Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.* (1996) 48 Cal.App.4th 1794 (*Dunk*).)

In determining whether a class settlement is fair, adequate and reasonable, the trial court should consider relevant factors, such as “the strength of plaintiffs’ case, the risk, expense, complexity and likely duration of further litigation, the risk of maintaining class action status through trial, the amount offered in settlement, the extent of discovery completed and the stage of the proceedings, the experience and views of counsel, the presence of a governmental participant, and the reaction of the class members to the proposed settlement.” (*Wershba, supra*, 91 Cal.App.4th at pp. 244-245, citing *Dunk, supra*, 48 Cal.App.4th at p. 1801 and *Officers for Justice v. Civil Service Com’n, etc.* (9th Cir. 1982) 688 F.2d 615, 624 (*Officers*).)

“The list of factors is not exclusive and the court is free to engage in a balancing and weighing of factors depending on the circumstances of each case.” (*Wershba, supra*, 91

Cal.App.4th at p. 245.) The court must examine the “proposed settlement agreement to the extent necessary to reach a reasoned judgment that the agreement is not the product of fraud or overreaching by, or collusion between, the negotiating parties, and that the settlement, taken as a whole, is fair, reasonable and adequate to all concerned.” (*Ibid.*, quoting *Dunk*, *supra*, 48 Cal.App.4th at p. 1801 and *Officers*, *supra*, 688 F.2d at p. 625, internal quotation marks omitted.)

The burden is on the proponent of the settlement to show that it is fair and reasonable. However “a presumption of fairness exists where: (1) the settlement is reached through arm’s-length bargaining; (2) investigation and discovery are sufficient to allow counsel and the court to act intelligently; (3) counsel is experienced in similar litigation; and (4) the percentage of objectors is small.”

(*Wershba*, *supra*, 91 Cal.App.4th at p. 245, citing *Dunk*, *supra*, 48 Cal.App.4th at p. 1802.)

III. DISCUSSION

A. Provisions of the Settlement

This case has been settled on behalf of the following class:

[A]ll current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union employees and union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by Defendant [Michels Pacific Energy, Inc. (“Defendant”)] in the State of California at any time during the Class Period.

(Declaration of Jonathan M. Genish in Support of Plaintiff’s Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement (“Genish Dec.”), Ex. 2 (“Settlement Agreement”), ¶ 6(a).)

The National Pipe Line Agreements means the collective bargaining agreements (“CBAs”) that cover Defendant’s employees who are members of the International Union of Operating Engineers (“IUOE”), the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (“IBT”), and the Laborers’ International Union of North America (“LIUNA”). (Settlement Agreement, ¶ 6(u).) The Class Period is defined as the period from September 26, 2018 through October 11, 2023. (Settlement Agreement, ¶ 6(f).)

The settlement also includes a subset of PAGA Employees, who are defined as “all current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union and union employees covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by Defendant in the State of California at any time during the PAGA Period.” (Settlement Agreement, ¶ 6(y).) The PAGA Period means the period from September 22, 2021 through October 11, 2023. (Settlement Agreement, ¶ 6(aa).)

1 According to the terms of settlement, Defendant will pay a maximum, non-reversionary
2 settlement amount of \$1,750,000. (Settlement Agreement, ¶¶ 6(p).) The gross settlement
3 amount includes attorney fees up to \$583,333.33 (1/3 of the gross settlement amount), litigation
4 costs not to exceed \$13,000, a PAGA allocation of \$200,000 (75 percent of which will be paid to
5 the LWDA and 25 percent of which will be paid to PAGA Employees), an enhancement award
6 up to \$10,000, and settlement administration costs not to exceed \$8,500. (Settlement Agreement,
7 ¶¶ 6(a), 6(l), 6(p), 6(t), 6(v), 6(x), 6(z), 6(ll), 9-12.) The net settlement amount will be
8 distributed to participating class members pro rata basis. (Settlement Agreement, ¶¶ 6(s), 6(v),
9 14.)

10 The settlement agreement originally provided that checks that remain uncashed 180 days
11 from the date the checks are dated will be void and the funds from those checks will be
12 distributed to the State of California Unclaimed Property Fund. (Settlement Agreement, ¶ 34.)
13 The parties have now executed Amendment No. 1 to the Settlement Agreement, which
14 designates California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. as the *cy pres* recipient. (Supplemental
15 Declaration of Jonathan M. Genish in Support of Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Approval of
16 Class Action and PAGA Settlement ("Supp. Genish Dec."), ¶ 5 & Ex. 2.) The court approves
17 the new *cy pres*.

18 In exchange for the settlement, the class members agree to release Defendant, and related
19 entities and persons, from any and all claims which were alleged or which could have been
20 alleged based on the factual allegations in the FAC arising during the Class Period. (Settlement
21 Agreement, ¶¶ 6(ff), 6(hh), 35.) PAGA Employees agree to release Defendant, and related
22 entities and persons, from any and all claims for civil penalties under PAGA arising from any of
23 the factual allegations in Plaintiff's PAGA letter arising during the PAGA Period. (Settlement
24 Agreement, ¶¶ 6(gg), 6(hh), 36.) In addition, Plaintiff agrees to a comprehensive general release.
25 (Settlement Agreement, ¶ 37.)

26 **B. Fairness of the Settlement**

27 Plaintiff states that the settlement was reached through discovery, analysis, and mediation
28 with Louis Marlin, Esq. (Genish Dec., ¶¶ 11-12, 22-25.) In anticipation of mediation, Plaintiff's

1 counsel conducted informal discovery, which included a random sampling of putative class
2 members' time and pay records, employee handbooks, CBAs, relevant wage and hour policies,
3 information regarding the total number of putative class members, the total workweeks worked
4 by the putative class members, the numbers of current versus former employees, the dates of
5 employment of the putative class members, and the average rate of pay for the putative class
6 members. (Genish Dec., ¶¶ 11, 23.) From the information provided, Plaintiff determined that
7 there were approximately 273 class members who worked 12,515 workweeks from September
8 26, 2018 through May 31, 2023. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 16, 26.) Plaintiff estimates that Defendant's
9 maximum potential liability for the claims is approximately \$7,946,500. (*Id.* at ¶¶ 27-39.)
10 Plaintiff provides a breakdown of this amount by claim. (*Ibid.*) Plaintiff discounted the value of
11 the claims given Defendant's defenses, the possibility that the court could substantially reduce
12 any PAGA penalties, and the risks and costs associated with class certification. (*Ibid.*) The
13 gross settlement amount represents approximately 22 percent of the potential maximum
14 recovery. The proposed settlement amount is within the general range of percentage recoveries
15 that California courts have found to be reasonable. (See *Cavazos v. Salas Concrete, Inc.*
16 (E.D.Cal. Feb. 18, 2022, No. 1:19-cv-00062-DAD-EPG) 2022 U.S.Dist.LEXIS 30201, at *41-42
17 [citing cases listing range of 5 to 25-35 percent of the maximum potential exposure].)

18 Additionally, the supplemental declaration from Plaintiff's counsel adequately addresses
19 the court's concerns regarding the scope of the definitions of the class and PAGA Employees.
20 Plaintiff's counsel explains that the class and PAGA Employees encompass two groups of
21 employees: (1) all current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt non-union employees
22 employed by Defendant in California at any time during the Class Period or PAGA Period,
23 respectively; and (2) all current and former hourly-paid and/or non-exempt union employees
24 covered under the National Pipe Line Agreements employed by Defendant in California at any
25 time during the Class Period or PAGA Period, respectively. (Supp. Genish Dec., ¶¶ 7-10.)

26 Thus, the court finds the terms of the settlement to be fair. The settlement provides for
27 some recovery for each class member and eliminates the risk and expense of further litigation.

28 **C. Incentive Award, Fees, and Costs**

1 Plaintiff requests an enhancement award in the amount of \$10,000 for the class
2 representative.

3 The rationale for making enhancement or incentive awards to named plaintiffs is
4 that they should be compensated for the expense or risk they have incurred in
5 conferring a benefit on other members of the class. An incentive award is
6 appropriate if it is necessary to induce an individual to participate in the suit.
7 Criteria courts may consider in determining whether to make an incentive award
8 include: 1) the risk to the class representative in commencing suit, both financial
and otherwise; 2) the notoriety and personal difficulties encountered by the class
representative; 3) the amount of time and effort spent by the class representative;
4) the duration of the litigation and; 5) the personal benefit (or lack thereof)
enjoyed by the class representative as a result of the litigation. These “incentive
awards” to class representatives must not be disproportionate to the amount of
time and energy expended in pursuit of the lawsuit.

9 (*Cellphone Termination Fee Cases* (2010) 186 Cal.App.4th 1380, 1394-1395, quotation marks,
10 brackets, ellipses, and citations omitted.)

11 Plaintiff filed a declaration generally describing his participation in the lawsuit. Plaintiff
12 declares that he spent approximately 25 to 30 hours in connection with this action, including
13 discussing the case with class counsel, searching for and providing documents to class counsel,
14 answering questions from class counsel, providing information regarding Defendant’s policies
15 and practices, and reviewing settlement documents. (Declaration of Plaintiff Michael Bravo in
16 Support of Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement, ¶¶ 4-9.)

17 Moreover, Plaintiff undertook risk by putting his name on the case because it might
18 impact his future employment. (See *Covillo v. Specialty’s Café* (N.D.Cal. 2014) 2014
19 U.S.Dist.LEXIS 29837, at *29 [incentive awards are particularly appropriate where a plaintiff
20 undertakes a significant “reputational risk” in bringing an action against an employer].)

21 The court has continued to find the sought-after amount excessive, and this issue was the
22 subject of the hearing requested by plaintiff’s counsel, and discussed with counsel at the hearing.
23 The requested amount of \$10,000 is more than the court may typically award for the amount of
24 time Plaintiff states he spent in connection with this action. Upon further consideration
25 following the hearing, the court approves an enhancement award in the reduced amount of
26 \$7,500.

27 The court also has an independent right and responsibility to review the requested
28 attorney fees and only award so much as it determines reasonable. (See *Garabedian v. Los*

1 *Angeles Cellular Telephone Co.* (2004) 118 Cal.App.4th 123, 127-128.) Plaintiff's counsel will
2 seek attorney fees up to \$583,333.33 (1/3 of the gross settlement amount) and litigation costs not
3 to exceed \$13,000. Plaintiff's counsel shall submit lodestar information (including hourly rates
4 and hours worked) prior to the final approval hearing in this matter so the court can compare the
5 lodestar information with the requested fees. Plaintiff's counsel shall also submit evidence of
6 actual costs incurred as well as evidence of any settlement administration costs.

7 **D. Conditional Certification of Class**

8 Plaintiff requests that the class be conditionally certified for purposes of the settlement.
9 Rule 3.769(d) of the California Rules of Court states that "[t]he court may make an order
10 approving or denying certification of a provisional settlement class after [a] preliminary
11 settlement hearing." California Code of Civil Procedure Section 382 authorizes certification of a
12 class "when the question is one of a common or general interest, of many persons, or when the
13 parties are numerous, and it is impracticable to bring them all before the court" As
14 interpreted by the California Supreme Court, Section 382 requires: (1) an ascertainable class; and
15 (2) a well-defined community of interest among the class members. (*Sav-On Drug Stores, Inc. v.*
16 *Superior Court* (2004) 34 Cal.4th 319, 326 (*Sav-On*).

17 The "community-of-interest" requirement encompasses three factors: (1) predominant
18 questions of law or fact; (2) class representatives with claims or defenses typical of the class;
19 and, (3) class representatives who can adequately represent the class. (*Sav-On, supra*, 34 Cal.4th
20 at p. 326.) "Other relevant considerations include the probability that each class member will
21 come forward ultimately to prove his or her separate claim to a portion of the total recovery and
22 whether the class approach would actually serve to deter and redress alleged wrongdoing."
23 (*Linder v. Thrifty Oil Co.* (2000) 23 Cal.4th 429, 435.) The plaintiff has the burden of
24 establishing that class treatment will yield "substantial benefits" to both "the litigants and to the
25 court." (*Blue Chip Stamps v. Superior Court* (1976) 18 Cal.3d 381, 385.)

26 As explained by the California Supreme Court,

27 The certification question is essentially a procedural one that does not ask whether
28 an action is legally or factually meritorious. A trial court ruling on a certification
motion determines whether the issues which may be jointly tried, when compared
with those requiring separate adjudication, are so numerous or substantial that the

1 maintenance of a class action would be advantageous to the judicial process and
2 to the litigants.

3 (Sav-On, *supra*, 34 Cal.4th at p. 326, internal quotation marks, ellipses, and citations omitted.)

4 Plaintiff states that there are approximately 306 class members that can be determined
5 from a review of Defendant's records. There are common questions regarding whether class
6 members were subjected to common practices that violated wage and hour laws. No issue has
7 been raised regarding the typicality or adequacy of Plaintiff as class representative. Therefore,
8 the court finds that the proposed class should be conditionally certified for settlement purposes.

9 **E. Class Notice**

10 The content of a class notice is subject to court approval. "If the court has certified the
11 action as a class action, notice of the final approval hearing must be given to the class members
12 in the manner specified by the court." (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.769(f).)

13 The parties have now submitted an amended class notice containing the changes
14 requested by the court. (Supp. Genish Dec., Ex. 2, Ex. A.) The notice generally complies with
15 the requirements for class notice. It provides basic information about the settlement, including
16 the settlement terms, and procedures to object or request exclusion. Accordingly, the amended
17 class notice is approved.

18 **IV. CONCLUSION**

19 The motion for preliminary approval of the class and representative action settlement is
20 GRANTED. The final fairness hearing is set for September 25, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. in
21 Department 19.

22
23 Dated: April 29, 2024

24 
25 Hon. Theodore C. Zayner
26 Judge of the Superior Court
27
28

EXHIBIT 4

Date	Type of Expense	Description of Expense	Amount
6/20/2022	Mailing	Records Request to Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.	\$7.33
6/20/2022	Mailing	Records Request to C T Corp. System, Agent for Michels Pacific Energy, Inc.	\$7.33
9/22/2022	Other	LWDA: PAGA Letter	\$75.00
9/22/2022	Mailing	PAGA Letter to MPE (Santa Clara)	\$7.82
9/22/2022	Mailing	PAGA Letter to MPE	\$7.82
9/22/2022	Mailing	PAGA Letter to CT Corp. System	\$7.82
9/26/2022	Filing	First Legal: Filing of Class Action Complaint & Initiating Docs	\$491.70
9/30/2022	Service	First Legal: Service of Complaint on Agent for MPE	\$120.71
10/7/2022	Filing	First Legal: Filing of POS	\$39.30
11/28/2022	Filing	First Legal: Filing of FAC	\$39.30
2/10/2023	Filing	First Legal: Joint CMC Statement & Notice of Payment of Complex Fees	\$1,081.55
5/2/2023	Mediation	Payment to Louis Marlin Mediation	\$9,000.00
5/2/2023	Mailing	Mailing of Mediation Payment	\$4.75
5/26/2023	Filing	First Legal: Filing of Joint CMC Statement (filed 5/30/23)	\$41.55
8/9/2023	Filing	Berger Consulting Group, LLC	\$1,700.00
8/9/2023	Mailing	Mailing of Check to Berger Consulting Group, LLC	\$0.63
8/17/2023	Filing	First Legal: Joint CMC Statement	\$41.50
11/3/2023	Filing	First Legal: Filing of MPA and Supporting Documents	\$103.95
11/7/2023	Filing	Steno: Amended MPA Notice	\$59.95
3/15/2024	Filing	Steno: Supplemental Genish Declaration; Revised Proposed MPA Order	\$59.95
	Filing	Estimated Cost - Steno: Filing of MFA and Supporting Docs	\$165.50
	Filing	Estimated Cost - Steno: Notice of Entry of Judgment or Order	\$59.95
	Filing	Estimated Cost - Steno: Admin Declaration re: Settlement Funds	\$59.95
Total:			\$13,183.36