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9 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
10 **FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO**
11 **(UNLIMITED JURISDICTION)**
12

13 MARGARITA PEREZ and MARIA DE LA
LUNA HUERTA on behalf of themselves and all
14 others similarly situated, and the general public,
and as “Aggrieved Employees” on behalf of
15 other “Aggrieved Employees” and the State of
California under the Labor Code Private
16 Attorneys General Act of 2004,

17 *Plaintiff(s),*
18

19 vs.

20 WORKFORCE PERSONNEL, INC., California
Corporation; DIAMOND WIPES
21 INTERNATIONAL, INC., California
22 Corporation; and DOES 1–50, inclusive,

23 *Defendant(s).*
24

Case No. CIVSB2220822

**PLAINTIFF MARIA DE LA LUNA
HUERTA’S MEMORANDUM OF
POINTS AND AUTHORITIES IN
SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR
PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF
CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT
WITH DEFENDANT WORKFORCE
PERSONNEL, INC.**

Hearing Date: October 2, 2026
Hearing Time: 1:30 p.m.
Hearing Dept.: 17, The Honorable
Joseph T. Ortiz

Action filed: September 19, 2022



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES.....	vi
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. BACKGROUND.....	1
A. The Claims and Procedural History	1
B. Discovery and Sampling.....	2
C. Mediation.....	3
III. OVERVIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT	4
A. Settlement Class and Aggrieved Employees Definition	4
B. Timing of Payments	6
C. Calculation of Settlement Shares.....	6
D. Apportionment of Settlement Shares.....	7
E. The Releases	7
F. Notice and Claims Process and Procedures.....	8
1. Disputes	9
2. Opting Out	10
3. Objecting	10
G. Uncashed Checks.....	10
IV. CERTIFICATION OF THE CLASS IS APPROPRIATE	11
A. The Settlement Class Is Objectively Ascertainable.....	11
B. The Membership of the Settlement Class Is Sufficiently Numerous	11
C. Class Members Share a Well-Defined Community of Interest	12
D. Plaintiff Is Typical of the Settlement Class	13
E. Plaintiff Will Adequately Represent the Settlement Class.....	14



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1	F. Class Action Treatment Is the Superior Means For Resolving The Claims Of The Class Members	14
2	V. THE COURT SHOULD GRANT PRELIMINARY APPROVAL BECAUSE THE SETTLEMENT IS FAIR, ADEQUATE, AND REASONABLE	15
3	A. Legal Standard.....	15
4	B. The Settlement Is Presumptively Fair	15
5	C. The Settlement Satisfies the <i>Kullar</i> Factors for Approval	16
6	1. Evaluation of Plaintiff’s Case.....	16
7	a. Risks Associated with the Unpaid Wages Claim	17
8	b. Risks Associated with the Meal Period Claims.....	17
9	c. Risks Associated with the Rest Break Claims.....	18
10	d. Risks Associated with the Failure to Indemnify Claim.....	18
11	e. Risks Associated with the Statutory Wage Statement Penalty Claims	19
12	f. Risks Associated with the Waiting Time Penalty Claims.....	19
13	g. Risks Associated With the PAGA Claim	19
14	h. Risks Associated With A Pick-Up Stix Campaign.....	20
15	2. Allocation of the PAGA Payment	22
16	3. Presence of Governmental Participant	23
17	VI. THE SETTLEMENT FAIRLY, ADEQUATELY, AND REASONABLY COMPENSATE CLASS MEMBERS BECAUSE IT WILL PAY EACH CLASS MEMBERS BASED ON THE POTENTIAL EXTENT OF HIS OR HER INJURY COMPARED TO OTHER CLASS MEMBERS	23
18	VII. ALLOCATION FOR CLASS COUNSEL’S FEE AWARD AND ATTORNEYS’ FEES AND COSTS AWARD FOR LITIGATION EXPENSES IS APPROPRIATE	24
19	VIII. THE CLASS REPRESENTATIVE SERVICE PAYMENT TO PLAINTIFF SHOULD BE PRELIMINARILY APPROVED BECASUSE IT IS FAIR, ADEQUATE, AND REASONABLE.....	25
20	IX. THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION COSTS SHOULD BE PRELIMINARILY APPROVED BECAUSE THEY ARE FAIR, ADEQUATE, AND REASONABLE.....	29



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1 X. THE PROPOSED NOTICE AND SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION PLAN SHOULD
2 BE APPROVED BECAUSE IT IS REASONABLY CALCULATED TO GIVE ACTUAL
3 NOTICE TO CLASS MEMBERS AND SUFFICIENT TIME TO EXERCISE THEIR
4 RIGHTS..... 29

5 XI. CONCLUSION 31
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23



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TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

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<i>Bell v. Farmers Ins. Exchange</i> (2004) 115 Cal.App.4th 715	3, 25
<i>Bernstein v. Virgin Am., Inc</i> (N.D. Cal. 2022) 2022 WL 17994018	20
<i>Bowles v. Superior Court</i> (1955) 44 Cal.2d 574	11
<i>Bravo v. Gale Triangle, Inc.</i> (C.D. Cal. Feb 16, 2017) 2017 WL 708766	21
<i>Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Superior Court</i> (2012) 53 Cal.4th 1004	17
<i>Capitol People First v. Dept. of Developmental Servs.</i> (2007) 155 Cal. App. 4th 676	12
<i>Carrington v. Starbucks Corp.</i> (2018) 30 Cal.App.5th 504	20, 22
<i>Cartt v. Superior Court</i> (1975) 50 Cal.App.3d 960	30
<i>Chindarah v. Pick Up Stix, Inc.</i> (2009) 171 Cal.App.4th 796	21
<i>Chu v. Wells Fargo Investments, LLC</i> (N.D. Cal. Feb. 16, 2011) 2011 WL 67245	22
<i>Classen v. Weller</i> (1983) 145 Cal.App.3d 27	13
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///	



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1	<i>Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.</i>	
2	(1996) 48 Cal.App.4th 1794	11
3	<i>Duran v. U.S. Bank National Assn</i>	
4	(2014) 59 Cal. 4th 1	17, 18
5	<i>Franco v. Ruiz Food Prods., Inc</i>	
6	(E.D. Cal. Nov. 27, 2012) 2012 WL 5941801	22
7	<i>Garcia v. Gordon Trucking</i>	
8	(E.D. Cal. Oct. 31, 2012) 2012 WL 5364575.....	22
9	<i>Hebbard v. Colgrove</i>	
10	(1972) 28 Cal.App.3d 1017	11
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12	(C.D. Cal. Sept. 2, 2014) 2014 WL 4703915	22
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14	(N.D. Cal. Aug. 8, 2008) 2008 WL 3385452	22
15	<i>Hopson v. Hanesbrands Inc.</i>	
16	(N.D. Cal. Apr. 3, 2009) 2009 WL 928133.....	22
17	<i>Hypolite v. Carlson</i>	
18	(1975) 52 Cal.App.3d 566	11
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22	(D.D.C. 1981) 526 F.Supp. 494.....	24
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25	<i>In re Omnivision Techs., Inc.</i>	
26	(N.D. Cal. 2008) 559 F.Supp.2d 1036.....	21
27	<i>In re Pacific Enterprises</i>	
28	(9th Cir. 1995) 47 F.3d 373	24
	<i>Jong v. Kaiser Foundation Hospital</i>	
	(2012) 226 Cal.App.4th 391	17
	///	



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1	<i>Ketchum v. Moses</i>	
2	(2001) 24 Cal. 4th 1122.....	24
3	<i>Kullar v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc.</i>	
4	(2008) 168 Cal.App.4th 116.....	15
5	<i>Laffitte v. Robert Half Intl, Inc.</i>	
6	(2016) 1 Cal. 5th 480.....	24
7	<i>Laguna v. Coverall N. Am., Inc.</i>	
8	(9th Cir. 2014) 2014 U.S. App. LEXIS 10259.....	22
9	<i>Lazarin v. Pro Unlimited, Inc.</i>	
10	(N.D. Cal. July 11, 2013) 2013 WL 3541217.....	22
11	<i>Lealao v. Beneficial Cal., Inc.</i>	
12	(2000) 82 Cal. App. 4th 19.....	24
13	<i>Magadia v. Wal-Mart Assocs.</i>	
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17	<i>Nordstrom Com. Cases</i>	
18	(2010) 186 Cal.App.4 th 576.....	22
19	<i>Richmond v. Dart Industries, Inc.</i>	
20	(1981) 29 Cal.3d 462.....	11
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22	(1981) 126 Cal.App.3d 926.....	11
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24	(2004) 34 Cal. 4th 319.....	12
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26	(C.D. Cal. 2016) 211 F.Supp.3d 1244.....	22
27	<i>Thurman v. Bayshore Transit Management, Inc.</i>	
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	(9th Cir. 1993) 8 F.3d 1370.....	21
	///	



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1	<i>Troester v. Starbucks Corp.</i>	
2	(2018) 5 Cal.5th 829	17
3	<i>Trotsky v. Los Angeles Fed. Sav. & Loan Assn.</i>	
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9	<i>Washington Mut. Bank, FA v. Superior Court</i>	
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14	(E.D. Cal. Aug. 21, 2019) 2019 WL 3943859	21
15	Statutes	
16	Bus. & Prof. Code, section 17200 et seq.	2, 13
17	Civ. Code., section 1542	8
18	Code Civ. Proc., section 382	1, 11, 14
19	Lab. Code, section 201	2
20	Lab. Code, section 202	2
21	Lab. Code, section 203	2
22	Lab. Code, section 218.5	26
23	Lab. Code, section 218.6	26
24	Lab. Code, section 226	2, 19
25	Lab. Code, section 226.2	2
26	Lab. Code, section 226.7	2



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1	Lab. Code, section 510	2
2	Lab. Code, section 512	2
3	Lab. Code, section 1194	2
4	Lab. Code, section 1197	2
5	Lab. Code, section 1198	2
6	Lab. Code, section 2698	2, 26
7	Lab. Code, section 2699	19, 20, 23
8	Lab. Code, section 2802	2
9	Rules	
10	California Rules of Court, Rule 3.769	15
11	Other	
12	<i>Alba Conte & Herbert B. Newberg</i> , Newberg on Class Actions § 3:29	13



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1 **MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR**
2 **PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT**

3 **I. INTRODUCTION**

4 Plaintiff Maria De La Luna Huerta (“Plaintiff”) submits this memorandum of points and
5 authorities in support of her unopposed motion for preliminary approval of the Class Action and
6 PAGA Settlement Agreement and Class Notice (the “Settlement”)³, which provides for a Gross
7 Settlement Amount (“GSA”) of \$340,000.00 in compromise of all disputed claims on behalf of
8 all individuals Defendant Workforce Personnel, Inc. employed at Diamond Wipes International,
9 Inc.’s Chino location as an hourly, non-exempt employee during the Class Period of September
10 19, 2018 through the date of preliminary approval of this Settlement. Through this Motion,
11 Plaintiff respectfully requests for this Court to (1) provisionally certify the below-defined Class
12 for settlement purposes only under Code of Civil Procedure § 382; (2) preliminarily approve the
13 Settlement; (3) preliminarily appoint Plaintiff as Class Representative; (4) appoint David Spivak
14 of The Spivak Law Firm and Louis M. Benowitz of Benowitz Law Corporation as Class Counsel;
15 (5) approve the proposed notice procedures and related forms; and (6) schedule a final approval
16 hearing.

17 This Court should grant Plaintiff’s motion because: (1) for settlement purposes, the
18 Settlement Class meets the requirements for class certification under Code of Civil Procedure §
19 382; (2) the Settlement warrants preliminary approval based on all indicia for fairness,
20 reasonableness, and adequacy; (3) for settlement purposes, Plaintiff is adequate to serve as Class
21 Representative; (4) Plaintiff’s attorneys are adequate to serve as Class Counsel; (5) the proposed
22 notice procedures, and related forms, fully comport with due process and adequately apprise Class
23 Members of their rights; and (6) a final approval hearing must be scheduled to allow Settlement
24 Class Members an opportunity to be heard regarding the Settlement and to give it finality.
25 Accordingly, for the reasons detailed below, this Court should grant Plaintiff’s Motion in its
26 entirety and preliminarily approve the Settlement.

27 **II. BACKGROUND**

28 Defendant Workforce is a staffing agency. Defendant employed Plaintiff in California as
an operator and packer from about August 2022 until January 2023. DS, ¶ 4.

A. The Claims and Procedural History

³ The Settlement is attached as Exhibit (“Ex.”) 1 to the Declaration of David Spivak (“DS”),
which is submitted herewith under a separate cover.



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On September 07, 2022, named plaintiff Margarita Perez notified Defendant, Diamond Wipes International, Inc. (Defendant and Diamond Wipes International, Inc. are hereafter referred to as “named Defendants”), and the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”), pursuant to the California Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, California Labor Code sections 2698, *et seq.* (“PAGA”), of alleged Labor Code violations committed by Defendant. On September 19, 2022, named plaintiff Margarita Perez filed a Class Action Complaint in the San Bernardino County Superior Court, Case No. CIVSB2220822, against Defendant on behalf of herself and others similarly situated, alleging causes of action on a class-wide basis for: (1) Failure to Pay All Wages Earned for All Hours Worked (Lab. Code §§ 510, 1194, 1197, and 1198); (2) Failure to Provide Rest Breaks (Lab. Code §§226.7 and 1198); (3) Failure to Provide Meal Periods (Lab. Code §§226.7, 512 and 1198); (4) Failure to Indemnify (Lab. Code §§ 1198 and 2802); (5) Wage Statement Penalties (Lab. Code §§ 226 and 226.2); (6) Waiting Time Penalties (Lab. Code §§ 201-203); and (7) Unfair Competition (Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200, *et seq.*). On November 22, 2022, named plaintiff Perez filed a second complaint against the same named Defendants under Private Attorneys General Act. On June 23, 2025, another former employee of Defendant, Plaintiff Maria De La Luna Huerta, through Counsel, sent a letter to the LWDA and named Defendants alleging specific provisions of the California Labor Code named Defendants violated. On November 14, 2025, and per the stipulation of the Parties, named plaintiff Margarita Perez filed a First Amended Complaint to add 1) Huerta as a plaintiff and 2) PAGA claims in this action (with all supporting facts). Defendant denies all of Plaintiff’s allegations and strongly contends that its wage and hour policies, practices and procedures are fully compliant with all applicable laws. Defense Counsel and Defendant represent that they are not aware of any other pending matter or action asserting claims that will be extinguished or adversely affected by the Settlement. Settlement, ¶ 7.1. DS, ¶¶ 5-6, Exs. 2 to 6.

B. Discovery and Sampling

Before agreeing to mediation, the Parties engaged in formal written discovery, including the discovery of the names and contact information of the putative class members through the *Belaire-West* notice process. On July 01, 2024, Plaintiff also requested that Defendant informally disclose documents and data to enable Plaintiff to prepare for settlement discussions, including the number of putative class members and aggrieved employees, the number of paychecks and workweeks for the various limitations periods applicable to Plaintiff’s claims. Plaintiff also



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1 requested a reasonable, randomly selected sample of Defendant's time and payroll, and related
2 personnel records. Finally, Plaintiff requested Defendant's written policies applicable to the
3 claims at hand and asked Defendant identify any and all comparable claims against it. The Parties
4 thereafter engaged in an informal, voluntary exchange of information in the context of privileged
5 settlement discussions to facilitate an early mediation. DS, ¶ 7.

6 Defendant contends that it employed 244 putative class members during the period of
7 September 19, 2018 to the date of mediation. Defendant produced the records of approximately
8 20.00% of the putative class members for the period of September 19, 2018 to February 21, 2025.
9 There were records for 45 employees in the sample. Plaintiff chose the sample. The sample was
10 randomly selected. The sample consisted of time and payroll records, and related records. DS, ¶
11 8.

12 Plaintiff retained Sridhar Srinivasan, a data analyst, to analyze the sample. Plaintiff also
13 employed the Raosoft⁴ Sample Size calculator (<http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>) to
14 determine if the sample size selected is statistically reliable. *Bell v. Farmers Ins. Exch.* (2004)
15 115 Cal. App. 4th 715 and *Duran v. U.S. Bank* (2014) 59 Cal.4th 1. The *Bell* court found a relative
16 margin of error of 32.4 percent was unacceptable whereas the *Duran* court found a relative margin
17 of error of 43.3 percent was unacceptable. Using a margin of error of 14%, a confidence level of
18 95%, and a population size of 244, the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator recommended a sample
19 of 41. DS, ¶ 9, **Exhibit 7** (Raosoft Sample Size Calculator results print-out). Thus, the sample
20 population that Plaintiff's data analyst evaluated is statistically reliable. *Id.*

21 **C. Mediation**

22 On March 19, 2025, following much of the foregoing informal discovery and exchange
23 of information, the Parties participated in a mediation session presided over by Mediator Steven
24 G. Mehta, Esq, an experienced class action mediator. During the mediation, the Parties had a full
25 day of productive negotiations and reached agreement on a class-wide settlement after the



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4 Raosoft advertises, "Raosoft, Inc. produces EZSurvey for the
Internet, InterForm, SurveyWin, EZReport and Rapid Report innovative survey software
programs for information gathering and analysis. The family of survey software supports data
collection and reporting for any form-based data. Support is for web-surveys and forms, email
distribution, diskette, PDA, laptop or pen-based: all types of distribution." The Raosoft webpage
advertises that is it "database web survey software for gathering information."
<http://www.raosoft.com/>. It also advertises, "The parameters of the sample size calculation are
something that you choose." <http://www.raosoft.com/suggestreading.html>.

1 mediation session. During the mediation sessions, each side, represented by her / its respective
2 counsel, recognized the risk of an adverse result in the Action and agreed to settle the Action and
3 all other matters covered by this Agreement pursuant to the terms and conditions of this
4 Agreement. DS, ¶ 10.

5 Plaintiff Margarita Perez stopped communicating with Plaintiffs' counsel. Plaintiffs'
6 counsel tried to contact Perez multiple times to go over the written terms of the proposed
7 settlements. Plaintiffs' counsel called her multiple times and left voicemail messages, sent her a
8 letter by mail, sent her multiple emails, and tried to contact her son. She did not return any of the
9 calls or emails. DS, ¶ 10.

10 Plaintiff Huerta contacted Plaintiff's counsel after she received the notice of the lawsuit
11 that the Parties sent to the putative class members pursuant to stipulated notice process (as
12 approved in *Belaire-West Landscape, Inc. v. Superior Court* (2007) 149 Cal.App.4th 554, 561
13 and *Williams v. Superior Court* (2017) 3 Cal.5th 531). Plaintiff Huerta agreed to step in as a
14 named Plaintiff. The Parties met and conferred and agreed and stipulated to add Ms. Huerta as a
15 named Plaintiff and as a class representative for the settlement class. Plaintiff Perez, therefore, is
16 not a signatory to the settlement agreement and will not be appointed as a class representative for
17 the settled class. Similar to the rest of the absent class members, she will receive the notice of
18 settlement and will have the option to opt out of the settlement or accept her share. Once final
19 judgment is entered approving the settlement agreement, her claims will also be dismissed. DS, ¶
20 10.

21 **III. OVERVIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT**

22 **A. Settlement Class and Aggrieved Employees Definition**

23 The Settlement defines the Settlement Class as all individuals Defendant Workforce
24 Personnel, Inc. employed at Diamond Wipes International, Inc.'s Chino location as an hourly,
25 non-exempt employee during the Class Period. The Class Period is September 19, 2018 through
26 the date of preliminary approval of this Settlement. Settlement, ¶¶ 1.5 and 1.12. The "Aggrieved
27 Employees" are All individuals Defendant Workforce Personnel, Inc. employed at Diamond
28 Wipes International, Inc.'s Chino location as hourly, non-exempt employees during the PAGA
Period of September 7, 2021 through the date of preliminary approval of this Settlement.
Settlement, ¶¶ 1.4 and 1.32.

Except as otherwise provided by Paragraph 9 of the
Agreement, Defendant promises to pay \$340,000.00 and no more as the Gross Settlement Amount



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1 and to separately pay any and all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portions of the
2 Individual Class Payments. Defendant has no obligation to pay the Gross Settlement Amount (or
3 any payroll taxes) prior to the deadline stated in Paragraph 4.3 of the Agreement. The
4 Administrator will disburse the entire Gross Settlement Amount without asking or requiring
5 Participating Class Members or Aggrieved Employees to submit any claim as a condition of
6 payment. None of the Gross Settlement Amount will revert to Defendant. Settlement, ¶ 3.1.

7 The Administrator will make and deduct the following payments from the Gross
8 Settlement Amount, in the amounts specified by the Court in the Final Approval (*see generally*
9 Settlement, ¶ 3):

10 **To Plaintiff:** Class Representative Service Payment to the Class Representative of not
11 more than \$5,000.00 (in addition to any Individual Class Payment and any Individual PAGA
12 Payment the Class Representative is entitled to receive as a Participating Class Member).
13 Defendant will not oppose Plaintiff's request for a Class Representative Service Payment that
14 does not exceed this amount. As part of the motion for Class Counsel Fees Payment and Class
15 Litigation Expenses Payment, Plaintiff will seek Court approval for any Class Representative
16 Service Payments no later than 16 court days prior to the Final Approval Hearing. If the Court
17 approves a Class Representative Service Payment less than the amount requested, the
18 Administrator will retain the remainder in the Net Settlement Amount. The Administrator will
19 pay the Class Representative Service Payment using IRS Form 1099. Plaintiff assumes full
20 responsibility and liability for employee taxes owed on the Class Representative Service Payment.

21 **To Class Counsel:** A Class Counsel Fees Payment of not more than one third of the Gross
22 Settlement Amount which is currently estimated to be \$113,333.33 and a Class Counsel Litigation
23 Expenses Payment of not more than \$15,000.00. Defendant will not oppose requests for these
24 payments provided that do not exceed these amounts. Plaintiff and/or Class Counsel will file a
25 motion for Class Counsel Fees Payment and Class Litigation Expenses Payment no later than 16
26 court days prior to the Final Approval Hearing. If the Court approves a Class Counsel Fees
27 Payment and/or a Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment less than the amounts requested,
28 the Administrator will allocate the remainder to the Net Settlement Amount. Released Parties
shall have no liability to Class Counsel or any other Plaintiff's Counsel arising from any claim to
any portion any Class Counsel Fee Payment and/or Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment.
The Administrator will pay the Class Counsel Fees Payment and Class Counsel Expenses



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1 Payment using one or more IRS 1099 Forms. Class Counsel assumes full responsibility and
2 liability for taxes owed on the Class Counsel Fees Payment and the Class Counsel Litigation
3 Expenses Payment and holds Defendant harmless, and indemnifies Defendant, from any dispute
4 or controversy regarding any division or sharing of any of these Payments.

5 **To the Administrator:** An Administrator Expenses Payment not to exceed \$12,000.00
6 except for a showing of good cause and as approved by the Court. To the extent the
7 Administration Expenses are less or the Court approves payment less than \$12,000.00, the
8 Administrator will retain the remainder in the Net Settlement Amount.

9 **To Each Participating Class Member:** An Individual Class Payment calculated by (a)
10 dividing the Net Settlement Amount by the total number of Work Weeks worked by all
11 Participating Class Members during the Class Period and (b) multiplying the result by each
12 Participating Class Member's Work Weeks.

13 **To the LWDA and Aggrieved Employees:** PAGA Penalties in the amount of \$5,000.00
14 to be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, with 75% (\$3,750.00) allocated to the LWDA
15 PAGA Payment and 25% (\$1,250.00) allocated to the Individual PAGA Payments.

16 **B. Timing of Payments**

17 The Administrator will make a total of two distributions. The first distribution will occur
18 14 days after the Effective Date or after the 12th Installment Payment (in the total amount of
19 \$169,999.92), whichever is later. The second and last distribution will occur 14 days after final
20 monthly Installment Payment (in the total amount of \$170,000.08). For each distribution, the
21 Administrator will mail checks for pro rata shares of Individual Class Payments, all Individual
22 PAGA Payments, the LWDA PAGA Payment, the Administration Expenses Payment, the Class
23 Counsel Fees Payment, the Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, and the Class
24 Representative Service Payment. Disbursement of the Class Counsel Fees Payment, the Class
25 Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment and the Class Representative Service Payment from each
26 distribution shall not precede disbursement of Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA
27 Payments. Settlement, ¶ 4.4.

28 **C. Calculation of Settlement Shares**

An Individual Class Payment calculated by (a) dividing the Net Settlement Amount by
the total number of Work Weeks worked by all Participating Class Members during the Class
Period and (b) multiplying the result by each Participating Class Member's Work Weeks.
Settlement, ¶ 3.2.4.



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1 The Administrator will calculate each Individual PAGA Payment by (a) dividing the
2 amount of the Aggrieved Employees' 25% share of PAGA Penalties \$1,250.00 by the total
3 number of PAGA Pay Periods worked by all Aggrieved Employees during the PAGA Period and
4 (b) multiplying the result by each Aggrieved Employee's PAGA Pay Periods. Aggrieved
5 Employees assume full responsibility and liability for any taxes owed on their Individual PAGA
6 Payment. Settlement, ¶ 3.2.5.1.

7 **D. Apportionment of Settlement Shares**

8 33.33% of each Participating Class Member's Individual Class Payment will be allocated
9 to settlement of wage claims (the "Wage Portion"). The Wage Portions are subject to tax
10 withholding and will be reported on an IRS W-2 Form. The 66.67% of each Participating Class
11 Member's Individual Class Payment will be allocated to settlement of claims for interest and
12 penalties (the "Non-Wage Portion"). The Non-Wage Portions are not subject to wage
13 withholdings and will be reported on IRS 1099 Forms. Participating Class Members assume full
14 responsibility and liability for any employee taxes owed on their Individual Class Payment.
15 Settlement, ¶ 3.2.4.1.

16 **E. The Releases**

17 Effective on the date when Defendant fully funds the entire Gross Settlement Amount and
18 funds all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portion of the Individual Class Payments,
19 Plaintiff, Class Members, and Class Counsel will release claims against all Released Parties as
20 follows:

21 **Plaintiff's Release.** Plaintiff and her respective former and present spouses,
22 representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns generally, release
23 and discharge Released Parties from all claims, transactions, or occurrences that occurred during
24 the Class Period, including, but not limited to: (a) all claims that were, or reasonably could have
25 been, alleged, based on the facts contained, in the Operative Complaint and (b) all PAGA claims
26 that were, or reasonably could have been, alleged based on facts contained in the Operative
27 Complaint, Plaintiff's PAGA Notice, or ascertained during the Action and released under 6.3,
28 below ("Plaintiff's Release"). Plaintiff's Release does not extend to any claims or actions to
enforce this Agreement, or to any claims for vested benefits, unemployment benefits, disability
benefits, social security benefits, workers' compensation benefits that arose at any time, or based
on occurrences outside the Class Period. Plaintiff acknowledges that Plaintiff may discover facts
or law different from, or in addition to, the facts or law that Plaintiff now knows or believes to be



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1 true but agrees, nonetheless, that Plaintiff's Release shall be and remain effective in all respects,
2 notwithstanding such different or additional facts or Plaintiff's discovery of them. This release
3 does not apply to Defendant Diamond Wipes International, Inc., or any of its officers, directors,
4 employees or agents. For purposes of Plaintiff's Release, Plaintiff expressly waives and
5 relinquishes the provisions, rights, and benefits, if any, of section 1542 of the California Civil
6 Code, which reads:

7 A general release does not extend to claims that the creditor or releasing party does not
8 know or suspect to exist in his or her favor at the time of executing the release, and that if
9 known by him or her would have materially affected his or her settlement with the debtor
or Released Party.

10 Settlement, ¶ 6.1.

11 **Release by Participating Class Members:** All Participating Class Members, on behalf
12 of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs,
13 administrators, successors, and assigns, release Released Parties from all claims stated in the
14 Operative Complaint and those based solely upon the facts alleged in the Operative Complaint.
15 Except as set forth in Section 6.3 of this Agreement, Participating Class Members do not release
16 any other claims, including claims for vested benefits, wrongful termination, violation of the Fair
17 Employment and Housing Act, unemployment insurance, disability, social security, workers'
18 compensation, or claims based on facts occurring outside the Class Period. This release does not
19 apply to Defendant Diamond Wipes International, Inc., or any of its officers, directors, employees
20 or agents. Settlement, ¶ 6.2.

21 **Release of PAGA Claim.** Plaintiff releases all claims for civil penalties that could have
22 been sought by the Labor Commissioner for the violations identified in Plaintiff's pre-filing letter
23 to the LWDA; Plaintiff does not release the claim for wages or damages of any Aggrieved
24 Employee unless such Aggrieved Employee is a Participating Class Member. This release does
25 not apply to Defendant Diamond Wipes International, Inc., or any of its officers, directors,
employees or agents. Settlement, ¶ 6.3.

26 **F. Notice and Claims Process and Procedures**

27 No later than three (3) business days after receipt of the Class Data, the Administrator
28 shall notify Class Counsel that the list has been received and state the number of Class Members,
PAGA Members, Work Weeks, and Pay Periods in the Class Data. Settlement, ¶ 8.4.1.



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1 Using best efforts to perform as soon as possible, and in no event later than 14 days after
2 receiving the Class Data, the Administrator will send to all Class Members identified in the Class
3 Data, via first-class United States Postal Service (“USPS”) mail, the Notice Packet with Spanish
4 translation, substantially in the forms attached to this Agreement as Exhibits A, B, C, and D. The
5 first page of the Class Notice shall prominently estimate the dollar amounts of any Individual
6 Class Payment and/or Individual PAGA Payment payable to the Class Member, and the number
7 of Work Weeks and PAGA Pay Periods (if applicable) used to calculate these amounts. Before
8 mailing Notice Packets, the Administrator shall update Class Member addresses using the
National Change of Address database. Settlement, ¶ 8.4.2.

9 Not later than three (3) business days after the Administrator’s receipt of any Notice
10 Packet returned by the USPS as undelivered, the Administrator shall re-mail the Notice Packet
11 using any forwarding address provided by the USPS. If the USPS does not provide a forwarding
12 address, the Administrator shall conduct a Class Member Address Search, and re-mail the Notice
13 Packet to the most current address obtained. The Administrator has no obligation to make further
14 attempts to locate or send Notice Packet to Class Members whose Notice Packet is returned by
the USPS a second time. Settlement, ¶ 8.4.3.

15 **1. Disputes**

16 Each Class Member shall have 60 days after the Administrator mails the Notice Packet
17 (plus an additional 14 days for Class Members whose Notice Packet is re-mailed) to challenge
18 the number of Class Work Weeks and PAGA Pay Periods (if any) allocated to the Class Member
19 in the Class Notice. This is also known as a dispute. A Work Week Dispute form, attached as
20 Exhibit C, may be used for this purpose but is not required. The Class Member may challenge the
21 allocation by communicating with the Administrator via fax, email or mail. The Administrator
22 must encourage the challenging Class Member to submit supporting documentation. In the
23 absence of any contrary documentation, the Administrator is entitled to presume that the Work
Weeks contained in the Class Notice are correct so long as they are consistent with the Class Data.
24 The Administrator’s determination of each Class Member’s allocation of Work Weeks and/or
25 PAGA Pay Periods shall be final and not appealable or otherwise susceptible to challenge. The
26 Administrator shall promptly provide copies of all challenges to calculation of Work Weeks
27 and/or PAGA Pay Periods to Defense Counsel and Class Counsel and the Administrator’s
28 determination the challenges. Settlement, ¶ 8.6.



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2. Opting Out

Class Members who wish to exclude themselves (opt-out of) the Class Settlement must send the Administrator, by fax, email, or mail, a signed written Request for Exclusion not later than 60 days after the Administrator mails the Notice Packet (plus an additional 14 days for Class Members whose Notice Packet is re-mailed). A Request for Exclusion is a letter from a Class Member or his/her representative that reasonably communicates the Class Member's election to be excluded from the Settlement and includes the Class Member's name, address and email address or telephone number. To be valid, a Request for Exclusion must be timely faxed, emailed, or postmarked by the Response Deadline. An Election Not to Participate in Settlement form, attached as Exhibit B, may be used for this purpose but is not required. The Administrator may not reject a Request for Exclusion as invalid because it fails to contain all the information specified in the Class Notice. The Administrator shall accept any Request for Exclusion as valid if the Administrator can reasonably ascertain the identity of the person as a Class Member and the Class Member's desire to be excluded. The Administrator's determination shall be final and not appealable or otherwise susceptible to challenge. If the Administrator has reason to question the authenticity of a Request for Exclusion, the Administrator may demand additional proof of the Class Member's identity. The Administrator's determination of authenticity shall be final and not appealable or otherwise susceptible to challenge. Settlement, ¶¶ 8.5.1-8.5.2.

3. Objecting

Only Participating Class Members may object to the class action components of the Settlement and/or this Agreement, including contesting the fairness of the Settlement, and/or amounts requested for the Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment and/or Class Representative Service Payment. Participating Class Members may send written objections to the Administrator, by fax, email, or mail. In the alternative, Participating Class Members may appear in Court (or hire an attorney to appear in Court) to present verbal objections at the Final Approval Hearing. A Participating Class Member who elects to send a written objection to the Administrator must do so not later than 60 days after the Administrator's mailing of the Notice Packet (plus an additional 14 days for Class Members whose Notice Packet was re-mailed). An The Objection form attached as Exhibit D may be used for this purpose but is not required. Non-Participating Class Members have no right to object to any of the class action components of the Settlement. Settlement, ¶ 8.7

G. Uncashed Checks



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1 For any Class Member whose Individual Class Payment check or Individual PAGA
2 Payment check is uncashed and cancelled after the void date, the Administrator shall transmit the
3 funds represented by such checks to the California Controller's Unclaimed Property Fund in the
4 name of the Class Member thereby leaving no "unpaid residue" subject to the requirements of
5 California Code of Civil Procedure Section 384, subd. (b). Settlement, ¶ 4.4.3.

6 **IV. CERTIFICATION OF THE CLASS IS APPROPRIATE**

7 Under Code of Civil Procedure § 382, a class may be certified if: (1) it is ascertainable
8 and its members are too numerous for joinder to be practical; (2) the representative and absent
9 class members share a community of interest and questions of law and fact common to the class
10 predominate over questions unique to individual class members; (3) the representative's claims
11 are typical of the class' claims; and (4) the representative will fairly and adequately represent the
12 class' interests. *See, e.g., Richmond v. Dart Industries, Inc.* (1981) 29 Cal.3d 462, 470. Moreover,
13 in the settlement context, the Court can use a lesser standard to determine the appropriateness of
14 a settlement class as opposed to a litigated class certification. *Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.* (1996) 48
15 Cal.App.4th 1794, 1807. As explained below, all of these requirements are met in this case.

16 **A. The Settlement Class Is Objectively Ascertainable**

17 A class is ascertainable when it may be readily identified without unreasonable expense
18 or time by reference to official records. *Rose v. City of Hayward* (1981) 126 Cal.App.3d 926, 932
19 (citing *Hypolite v. Carlson* (1975) 52 Cal.App.3d 566, 579). Plaintiff maintains that the above-
20 defined Class is ascertainable because its members may be identified by reference to Defendant's
21 records and Defendant has agreed to share the relevant information from its records to facilitate
22 the settlement process. DS, ¶ 12; Settlement, ¶ 4.2. Therefore, the Settlement Class is
23 ascertainable.

24 **B. The Membership of the Settlement Class Is Sufficiently Numerous**

25 The Settlement Class has sufficiently numerous members to render joinder impractical.
26 No set number is required as a matter of law to maintain a class action. *Hebbard v. Colgrove*
27 (1972) 28 Cal.App.3d 1017, 1030. Defendant estimates that there are approximately 244 Class
28 Members. DS, ¶ 13. Plaintiff maintains that it would be impractical and economically inefficient
to require each Class Members to separately maintain an individual action or be joined as a named
plaintiff in this action. The California Supreme Court has upheld a class of as few as 10
individuals. *See Bowles v. Superior Court* (1955) 44 Cal.2d 574. In light of these considerations,
the Settlement Class' membership is sufficiently numerous. DS, ¶13 *See Daar v. Yellow Cab Co.*



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1 (1967) 67 Cal.2d 695.

2 **C. Class Members Share a Well-Defined Community of Interest**

3 The community of interest requirement “embodies three factors: (1) predominant common
4 questions of law or fact; (2) class representatives with claims or defenses typical of the class; and
5 (3) class representatives who can adequately represent the class.” *Sav-On Drug Stores, Inc. v.*
6 *Superior Court* (2004) 34 Cal. 4th 319, 326. It “does not mandate that class members have
7 uniform or identical claims.” *Capitol People First v. Dept. of Developmental Servs.* (2007) 155
8 Cal. App. 4th 676, 692. Rather, courts focus on the defendant’s internal policies and “pattern and
9 practice . . . in order to assess whether that common behavior toward similarly situated plaintiffs
renders class certification appropriate.” *Id.* (citing *Sav-On*, 34 Cal. 4th at 333).

10 To justify certification, the class proponent “‘must show ... that questions of law or fact
11 common to the class predominate over the questions affecting the individual members’” *See,*
12 *Arenas v. El Torito Rests., Inc.* (2010) 183 Cal. App. 4th 723, 732 (citing *Washington Mut. Bank,*
13 *FA v. Superior Court* (2001) 248 Cal. 4th 906, 913). In light of the more lenient standard for
14 certification of a settlement class, the Parties agree that for the purposes of the Settlement only,
the claims of the Class Members all stem from the same sources. DS, ¶ 14.

15 In this case, Plaintiff asserts all Class Members were subject to the same or similar
16 operations and employment policies, practices, and procedures. The claims arise from
17 Defendant’s alleged policy-driven failure to pay wages, unauthorized and unlawful wage
18 deductions, failure to provide meal periods, failure to authorize and permit rest periods, failure to
19 issue proper wage statements, failure to indemnify for business expenses, failure to timely pay
20 wages, and related labor law violations, all of which Plaintiff claims constitute unfair business
21 practices and give rise to PAGA penalties. Plaintiff asserts that common questions include, but
22 are not limited to: (1) Whether Defendant failed to pay all wages earned to Class Members for all
23 hours worked at the correct rates of pay; (2) Whether Defendant failed to provide the class with
24 all meal and rest periods in compliance with California law; (3) Whether Defendant failed to pay
the class one additional hour of pay on workdays it failed to provide the class with one or more
25 meal or rest periods in compliance with California law; (4) Whether Defendant failed to
indemnify the class for all necessary business expenditures incurred during the discharge of their
26 duties; (5) Whether Defendant knowingly and intentionally failed to provide the class with
27 accurate wage statements; (6) Whether Defendant willfully failed to provide the class with timely
28



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1 final wages; and (7) Whether Defendant engaged in unfair competition within the meaning of
2 Business and Professions Code section 17200, *et seq.*, with respect to the class. DS, ¶ 14.
3 Therefore, common questions predominate.

4 **D. Plaintiff Is Typical of the Settlement Class**

5 The class representative must be similarly situated to the rest of the purported class. *See*
6 *Classen v. Weller* (1983) 145 Cal. App. 3d 27, 46 (stating “it has never been the law in California
7 that the class representative must have identical interests with the class members. The only
8 requirements are ... that the class representative be *similarly* situated”) (emphasis in original); *See*
9 *also* Newberg, § 3:29 (typicality “focuses on whether there exists a relationship between the
10 Plaintiff’s claims and the claims alleged on behalf of the class”). Typicality requires a showing
11 that the plaintiff’s claims or defenses are typical of the class. *Lockheed Martin Corp. v. Superior*
12 *Court* (2003) 29 Cal.4th 1096, 1104. The purported class representative’s claims must be
13 “typical” but not necessarily identical to the claims of other class members. It is sufficient that
14 the representative is similarly situated so that he or she will have the motive to litigate on behalf
15 of all class members. *Classen v. Weller* (1983) 145 Cal.App.3d 27, 45. Thus, it is not necessary
16 that the class representative has personally incurred all of the damages suffered by each of the
17 other class members. *Wershba v. Apple Computer, Inc.* (2001) 91 Cal.App.4th 224, 238. Notably,
18 “it has never been the law in California that the class representative must have *identical* interests
19 with the class members.” *Classen, supra*, 145 Cal.App.3d at p. 46. Plaintiff contends that her
20 claims are typical for the purposes of certifying the Settlement Class. Plaintiff asserts that she,
21 like absent Class Members, was subject to the same relevant policies and procedures governing
22 her compensation, hours of work and meal and rest periods. Because Plaintiff contends that she
23 was subject to the same general course of conduct as absent Class Members, resolving the
24 common questions as they apply to Plaintiff will determine Defendant’s *prima facie* liability to
25 all Class Members. Moreover, Plaintiff’s claims could potentially be subject to the same primary
26 affirmative defenses as those of absent Class Members. Accordingly, Plaintiff’s claims are typical
27 of the Class. Plaintiff contends that her claims are typical for the purposes of certifying the
28 Settlement Class. Plaintiff asserts that she, like absent Class Members was subject to the same
relevant policies and procedures governing her compensation, hours of work and meal and rest
periods. Because Plaintiff contends that she was subject to the same general course of conduct as
absent Class Members, resolving the common questions as they apply to Plaintiff will determine



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Defendant's *prima facie* liability to all Class Members. Moreover, Plaintiff's claims could potentially be subject to the same primary affirmative defenses as those of absent Class Members. Accordingly, Plaintiff's claims are typical of the Class. DS, ¶ 15; *see also generally* Plaintiff Huerta's declaration in support of the motion for preliminary approval of the settlement.

E. Plaintiff Will Adequately Represent the Settlement Class

The adequacy requirement is met where the plaintiff is represented by counsel qualified to conduct the litigation and the plaintiff's interest in the litigation is not antagonistic to the class' interests. *McGhee v. Bank of America* (1976) 60 Cal.App.3d 442, 451. In other words, where the plaintiff has adequate counsel, the plaintiff may represent the entire class absent any disabling conflicts of interest that might hinder the plaintiff's ability to represent the class. DS, ¶ 16.

First, Class Counsel have supplied the Court with declarations to show that they are adequate to represent the Settlement Class and that they have significant experience in employment litigation generally, and wage and hour and employment-related class action litigation specifically. *See* DS, ¶¶ 16-25; Declaration of Louis M. Benowitz ("Benowitz Decl.") ¶¶ 2-13. Thus, Plaintiff's counsel are adequate to serve as Class Counsel.

Second, Plaintiff contends that she is an adequate class representative. Plaintiff and the Class Members have strong and co-extensive interests in this litigation because they all worked for Defendant during the relevant time period, allegedly suffered the same alleged injuries from the same alleged course of conduct, and there is no evidence of any conflict of interest between Plaintiff and the Class Members. DS, ¶ 17; *see also generally* Plaintiff Huerta's declaration in support of the motion for preliminary approval of the settlement. Moreover, as discussed above Plaintiff is typical of all Class Members and Plaintiff has demonstrated her commitment to the Settlement Class by, among other things, retaining experienced counsel, providing counsel with documents and extensively speaking with them to assist in identifying the claims asserted in this case, assisting them in identifying witnesses, as well as exposing herself to the risk of attorneys' fees and costs awards against her if this lawsuit had been unsuccessful. DS, ¶ 17; *see also generally* Plaintiff Huerta's declaration in support of the motion for preliminary approval of the settlement. Thus, Plaintiff is adequate to serve as settlement class representative. Accordingly, this Court should find that Plaintiff and her counsel are adequate to represent the Settlement Class as required under Code of Civil Procedure § 382.

F. Class Action Treatment Is the Superior Means For Resolving The Claims Of The Class Members

1 Plaintiff further contends that a class action is also superior to other means of adjudicating
2 the issues in this action. The predominance of common legal and factual questions shows that this
3 Court could fairly adjudicate the claims of Class Members through a single class action. In view
4 of the *theoretical* alternatives that proposed class members could potentially utilize—
5 representative PAGA action (where there is less relief available), individual civil lawsuits or wage
6 claims through the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (where there would be relatively
7 little money at stake, but the claims would be time-consuming to litigate)—a class action is plainly
8 superior to all of them. Thus, this consideration supports conditional class action treatment for
9 purposes of this Settlement only. DS, ¶ 26.

9 **V. THE COURT SHOULD GRANT PRELIMINARY APPROVAL BECAUSE THE**
10 **SETTLEMENT IS FAIR, ADEQUATE, AND REASONABLE**

10 **A. Legal Standard**

11 A class action settlement requires court approval. California Rules of Court (“CRC”),
12 Rule 3.769 provides three steps for approval: (1) Preliminary approval after submission of a
13 written motion for preliminary approval, the proposed class settlement, and the proposed class
14 notice; (2) Issuance of notice of settlement to class members; and (3) A final settlement approval
15 hearing where class members may be heard regarding the settlement, and at which evidence and
16 argument concerning the fairness, adequacy, and reasonableness of the settlement is presented.
17 The decision to approve or reject a class settlement is committed to the Court’s broad discretion.
18 *Kullar v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc.* (2008) 168 Cal.App.4th 116, 128. The decision to approve
19 class settlement may be reversed only upon a showing of “clear abuse of discretion.” *Id.*

19 **B. The Settlement Is Presumptively Fair**

20 In assessing preliminary approval, a court evaluates if the settlement process has certain
21 indicia of fairness. A “presumption of fairness exists where (1) the settlement is reached through
22 arm’s-length bargaining; (2) investigation and discovery are sufficient to allow counsel and the
23 court to act intelligently; (3) counsel is experienced in similar litigation; and (4) the percentage
24 of objectors is small.” *Kullar*, 168 Cal. App. 4th at 128, quoting *Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.*, (1996)
25 48 Cal.App.4th at 1794.

26 The class settlement here satisfies all of these factors. DS, ¶ 27. The Settlement resulted
27 from thorough, arms’ length, negotiations between experienced counsel with the assistance of a
28 respected mediator after sufficient discovery was exchanged to assess the relative strengths and
weaknesses of their respective cases and Defendant’s estimated exposure. *Id.*



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1 Plaintiff prepared “damages” estimates in advance of the mediation. DS, ¶ 28, Ex. 8.
2 Plaintiff determined Defendant’s maximum possible exposure for restitution and penalties to be
3 approximately \$18,219,914.08 (consisting of \$2,648,647.43 in unpaid wages, \$3,092,531.66 in
4 missed meal period premium wages, \$3,153,070.62 in missed rest break premium wages,
5 \$13,530.00 in unreimbursed expenses, \$1,264,900.00 for wage statement penalties, \$911,534.36
6 for waiting time penalties, and \$7,135,700.00 for civil penalties under PAGA. Plaintiff calculated
7 the damages based on the number of workweeks and pay periods provided by Defendant,
8 Plaintiff’s reports, and the sample data. *Id.*

9 However, based on the difficulties of proof, the Defendant’s defenses, and the other
10 attendant risks Plaintiff identifies below, Plaintiff estimates the likely awards at trial should
11 Plaintiff prevail to be the following amounts:

- 12 a. Unpaid wages with interest in the amount of \$529,729.49;
- 13 b. Meal period premium wages with interest in the amount of \$618,506.33;
- 14 c. Rest period premium wages with interest in the amount of \$630,614.12;
- 15 d. Unreimbursed expenses with interest in the amount of \$2,706.00;
- 16 e. Statutory pay stub penalties in the amount of \$252,980.00;
- 17 f. Waiting time penalties in the amount of \$182,306.87; and
- 18 g. Civil penalties in the amount of \$259,480.00.

19 The total of these amounts is \$2,476,322.82. The Gross Settlement Amount of \$340,000.00 is
20 13.73% of this amount. DS, ¶ 29. Plaintiff’s initial estimates do not realistically account for the
21 risks outlined below or the risk that a class will not be certified. Therefore, Plaintiff believes a
22 class settlement for \$340,000.00 is fair and reasonable. *Id.*

23 **C. The Settlement Satisfies the *Kullar* Factors for Approval**

24 The *Kullar* case sets forth several factors a court should consider in determining whether
25 to approve a class settlement. These factors include: (1) the strength of plaintiff’s case; (2) the
26 risk, expense, complexity and likely duration of further litigation; (3) the risk of maintaining class
27 action status through trial; (4) the amount offered in settlement; (5) the extent of discovery
28 completed and stage of the proceedings; (6) the experience and views of counsel; (7) the presence
of a governmental participant; and (8) the reaction of the class members to the proposed
settlement. 168 Cal.App.4th at 128. As demonstrated herein, the Settlement satisfies each of these
factors.

1. Evaluation of Plaintiff’s Case



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1 **a. Risks Associated with the Unpaid Wages Claim**

2 Plaintiff claims that Defendant required Plaintiff and the putative class members to work
3 off the clock and complete these tasks before they could clock in at the beginning of their shifts:
4 1) submit to Covid-19 temperature checks, 2) don their protective gear, 3) place their personal
5 belongings and cellphones in lockers, and 4) stand in long lines. There is a risk that Plaintiff's
6 recovery for unpaid wages would be extremely limited at best, especially if Defendant can prove
7 that its policies throughout the relevant time period prohibited off-the-clock work. *See Jong v.*
8 *Kaiser Foundation Hospital* (2014) 226 Cal.App.4th 391 (employer must have notice of off-the-
9 clock work for it to be compensable). Moreover, while Defendant disputes that off-the-clock work
10 occurred, it contends that any time spent off the clock was *de minimis*. The California Supreme
11 Court in *Troester v. Starbucks Corp.* (2018) 5 Cal. 5th 829, 835 suggested that irregular and
12 minute periods of time may still be subject to a *de minimis* defense even if compensable. (Stating
13 that "We do not decide whether there are circumstances where compensable time is so minute or
14 irregular that it is unreasonable to expect the time to be recorded."). Following *Troester*,
15 Defendant contends that the *de minimis* doctrine may apply here because the time spent off the
16 clock were minute and insignificant. Accordingly, a large award of penalties seems unlikely with
17 respect to this claim. DS, ¶ 30.

18 The difficulty inherent in proving that off-the-clock work occurred poses a significant
19 hurdle to Plaintiff. Plaintiff will rely on declarations and witness statements to prove this claim.
20 Generally, a court will not certify a class unless it can determine an appropriate classwide
21 methodology. *See, e.g., Duran v. U.S. Bank National Assn.* (2014) 59 Cal. 4th 1. Here, Plaintiff
22 may rely heavily on anecdotal evidence to prove the off-the-clock work claim, especially given
23 the lack of records indicating when such off-the-clock work may have taken place. Individualized
24 inquiries would need to be conducted person-by-person, day-by-day, to determine if an individual
25 in fact worked "minutes" off-the-clock on a "regular" basis. Accordingly, there is a significant
26 risk that the Court would consider this evidentiary showing insufficient as a classwide
27 methodology. DS, ¶ 31.

28 **b. Risks Associated with the Meal Period Claims**

 There are risks to Plaintiff's meal period claim. DS, ¶ 32. Defendant contends that, to
establish a violation for missed meal periods, a plaintiff must do more than show that a meal break
was not taken. *Brinker*, 53 Cal. 4th at 1004. So long as an employer provides employees with a
"reasonable opportunity" to take a duty-free meal period, it has no further duty to "police meal



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breaks and ensure no work thereafter is performed.” *Id.* at 1040-41. *Id.* Instead, a plaintiff must show the employer impeded, discouraged, or prohibited the employee from taking a proper break, or otherwise failed to release the employee of all control. *Id.* “Thus, the crucial issue with regard to the meal break claim is the reason that a particular employee may have failed to take a meal break.” *Washington v. Joe’s Crab Shack* (N.D. Cal. 2010) 271 F.R.D. 629, 641. *Id.*

Defendant contends it did not impede or discourage Plaintiff, or any other employees, from taking their meal or rest periods. Defendant’s policies mandate that employees take at least a 30-minute, uninterrupted meal periods and record the beginning and ending time of their meal breaks each day on their time records. The time records that comprise the random sample Defendant produced to Plaintiff for purposes of mediation show that meal periods were taken the vast majority of the time. Of the time records that show a late, short or no lunch, individualized evidence may be necessary to determine whether they occurred due to conduct of the Defendant or each of the employees concerned. Accordingly, there is a significant risk that the value of Plaintiff’s meal period claim would be substantially reduced at trial. DS, ¶ 33.

c. Risks Associated with the Rest Break Claims

There are risks to Plaintiff’s rest period claim. DS, ¶ 34. Employers are not required to record rest periods and such periods are paid. *Id.* Defendant contends it provided non-exempt employees the opportunity to take rest periods in accordance with California law. Further, Defendant’s written policies on meal and rest periods are consistent with the Wage Order. *Id.* Thus, unlike meal periods, where there are often records showing whether an employee clocked out or not, there is no such evidence to prove a missed rest period or that the employer refused to authorize and permit one. *Id.* Managing such claims at trial has become exceedingly difficult. *Id.* Plaintiff will depend on sample witness testimony and surveys to prove the claims. *Id.* While a victory with such evidence is certainly possible, relevant caselaw makes such claims risky from a trial management and due process perspective. *Id.*, *See Duran v. U.S. Bank National Assn.*, (2014) 59 Cal. 4th 1, 31 (explaining “[I]f sufficient common questions exist to support class certification, it may be possible to manage individual issues through the use of surveys and statistical sampling.”); *Tyson Foods, Inc. v. Bouphakeo* (2015) 136 S.Ct. 382; *Comcast Corporation v. Behrend* (2013) 133 S.Ct. 1426.

d. Risks Associated with the Failure to Indemnify Claim

There is a risk that the Court may consider Plaintiff’s claims as to Defendant’s alleged failure to indemnify for business expenses to be individual in nature and thus decline to certify



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1 the class. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant required Plaintiff and the Class Members to use their
2 personal items including protective gears and tools, and failed to indemnify them for these
3 business expenses. Defendant presented evidence that it has supplied its employees with tools,
4 equipment, and other supplies. As such, there is a risk that the Court may consider Plaintiff's
5 claims to be individual in nature and unfit for class wide resolution. DS, ¶ 35.

6 **e. Risks Associated with the Statutory Wage Statement Penalty Claims**

7 Plaintiff also asserts claims for wage statement violations, untimely wage violations, and
8 PAGA penalties. Under Labor Code section 226, wage statements must include various
9 information, including the applicable rates of pay, corresponding hours worked, and gross pay.
10 Here, Plaintiff's wage statement claim has the same underlying risks as the above claims, as it is
11 derivative of them. On their face, the wage statements issued by Defendant comply with the
12 requirements of Labor Code § 226. DS, ¶ 36.

13 **f. Risks Associated with the Waiting Time Penalty Claims.**

14 Without proof willful behavior, Plaintiff will be unable to recover these penalties. DS, ¶
15 37.

16 **g. Risks Associated With the PAGA Claim**

17 Regarding PAGA, a court has discretion to award a lesser amount than the maximum
18 penalty. Lab. Code § 2699(e)(2); *Thurman v. Bayshore Transit Management, Inc.* (2012) 203
19 Cal.App.4th 1112, 1135 (reducing PAGA award). As set forth above, Defendant has posed valid
20 defenses to the Labor Code claims underlying Plaintiff's PAGA allegations. Thus, the PAGA
21 claims likewise face significant uncertainty. There is a risk that the Court would consider the
22 maximum civil penalty available to be confiscatory. DS, ¶ 38.

23 This uncertainty increases Plaintiff's risk of pursuing the PAGA claims and required a
24 significant discount for settlement purposes. DS, ¶ 39. For mediation purposes, Plaintiff's counsel
25 estimated a maximum possible exposure of approximately \$7,135,700.00 in civil penalties. This
26 estimate did not take into account any of the risks discussed above and assumed a violation for
27 every single pay period. *Id.* Plaintiff's counsel also assessed multiple penalties for the same pay
28 period for the same alleged violations of different Labor Code provisions and derivative
violations. *Id.* Although two federal district court decisions held that "stacking" PAGA penalties
in this fashion may be appropriate to determine the amount in controversy for purposes of removal
jurisdiction, Plaintiff's counsel is not aware of any California state courts awarding plaintiffs
multiple PAGA penalties for the same violation for the same pay period under different Labor



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Code provisions. *Id.* This may be because the PAGA does not provide for what many employers characterize as claim splitting and not merely stacking. *Id.*

Plaintiff is aware of only two significant awards under the PAGA in a contested proceeding, both issued by federal district courts.⁵ DS, ¶ 40. PAGA penalty awards are often small even for egregious, intentional violations of the Labor Code.⁶ *Id.* For instance, on October 24, 2017, the Los Angeles Superior Court awarded a prevailing PAGA plaintiff, represented by very experienced counsel, civil penalties totaling only \$50.00. *Shields v. Security Paving Company, Inc.*, LA Superior Court case no. BC492828. Further, in *Carrington v. Starbucks Corp.* (2018) 30 Cal.App.5th 504, 529, the Court of Appeal affirmed judgment which provided for a PAGA penalty of only \$5 per pay period for the defendant's meal period violations. A similar result could occur here. *Id.*

h. Risks Associated With A Pick-Up Stix Campaign

Plaintiff also considered the possibility that Defendant could launch a *Pick Up Stix*

⁵ In *Bernstein v. Virgin Am., Inc.*, (N.D. Cal. 2022) 2022 WL 17994018, the court awarded civil penalties under the PAGA of \$12,277,500.00 where total adjusted damages were \$18,695,692.58. In this regard, the district court stated,

The plain language of PAGA provides that “a court may award a lesser amount than the maximum civil penalty amount specified by this part if, *based on the facts and circumstances of the particular case*, to do otherwise would result in an award that is unjust, arbitrary and oppressive, or confiscatory.” Cal. Lab. Code s 2699(e)(2) (emphasis added). The relationship between the amount of total damages and the amount of maximum PAGA penalties is certainly a “circumstance” of the case under the term's ordinary meaning. The weight given to that circumstance is greater in this case because Plaintiffs' PAGA penalties are based on PAGA claims that are all derivative of Plaintiffs' individual claims except for one. As a general matter, it would be excessively punitive for the penalty imposed as a consequence of a discrete injury or set of injuries to exceed the damages caused by that injury or set of injuries.

Id., fnnt. 9. The district court further stated, “Virgin “has not presented any evidence that the full penalty would be excessive in relation to its ability to pay,” the weight of this factor is lessened.” *Id.*

In *Robert Magadia v. Wal-Mart Assocs.* (N.D. Cal. 2019) 384 F. Supp. 3d. 1058, the court awarded approximately \$102 million in damages, primarily based on the Defendant's failures to comply with the requirements of California Labor Code section 226.

⁶ In 2012, Plaintiff's Counsel tried *Ghrdilyan v. RJ Financial, Inc.*, Los Angeles Superior Court case number BC430633. In *Ghrdilyan*, the employer underpaid commission overtime wages. The plaintiff sought in excess of \$9 million in civil penalties under the PAGA. After a bench trial, the Honorable Judge Ronald M. Sohigian awarded approximately \$325,000 in civil penalties under the PAGA.



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1 campaign and pursue individual release agreements from the Class Members. An employer enjoys
2 the right to settle a putative class member's disputed wage claims individually, without the
3 consent or involvement of class counsel. DS, ¶ 41 (see *Chindarah v. Pick Up Stix, Inc.* (2009)
4 171 Cal. App. 4th 796. *Id.* Defendant may launch a "pick off" settlement campaign to pursue
5 individual release agreements from the Class Members, thereby potentially narrowing the size of
6 the Settlement Class – 244 members - until it is no longer numerous enough for class certification.
7 *Id.* Plaintiff, then, may not have sufficient number of employees to represent. This led to a
8 significant reduction of claim value in settlement negotiations. *Id.*

9 Plaintiff's Counsel applied discounts to the maximum possible exposure to account for all
10 other risks discussed below. While it is difficult to assign anything but crudely-determined
11 percentages of risk to any of the claims, it is safe to say that the risk that a *Pick Up Stix* campaign
12 would preclude recovery for such employees is substantial and alone justifies a significant
13 discount because Defendant would likely by trial have gathered releases from the majority of the
14 Class Members. A settlement for approximately 13.73% of the potential recovery is a proportion
15 substantially in excess of recovery proportions sanctioned by existing case law.⁷ DS, ¶ 42.

16 While the evidence gathered through Plaintiff's discovery supports the merits of the
17 claims asserted in this lawsuit, Plaintiff and her counsel recognize that continued litigation
18 presents significant risks that support a downward departure from Defendant's estimated liability
19 exposure. DS, ¶ 43. In view of the risks, the Settlement reflects Plaintiff's estimate of the total
20 amount of damages, monetary penalties or other relief that the Class could reasonably expect to
21 be awarded at trial, taking into account the likelihood of prevailing and other attendant risks. *Id.*
22 It also represents a fair, adequate, and reasonable compromise amount for these claims and
23 warrants preliminary approval. *Id.*, *Torrisi v. Tucson Elec. Power Co.* (9th Cir. 1993) 8 F.3d 1370,
24 1376 (the financial condition of defendant predominated in assessing the reasonableness of

25 ⁷ See, e.g., *In re Newbridge Networks Sec. Litig.*, 1998 WL 765724 at *2 (D.D.C. Oct. 23, 1998)
26 ("[A]n agreement that secures roughly six to twelve percent of a total trial recovery . . . seems to
27 be within the targeted range of reasonableness."); *Wise v. Ulta Salon, Cosmetics & Fragrance,*
28 *Inc.* 2019 WL 3943859 at *8 (E.D. Cal. Aug. 21, 2019) (granting preliminary approval where the
proposed allocation to settle class claims was at least 9.53 percent); *Bravo v. Gale Triangle, Inc.*,
2017 WL 708766 at * 10 (C.D. Cal. Feb 16, 2017) ("a settlement for fourteen percent recovery
of Plaintiffs' maximum recovery is reasonable"); *In re Omnivision Techs., Inc.*, 559 F.Supp.2d
1036, 1042 (N.D. Cal. 2008) (approving settlement amount that "is just over 9% of the maximum
potential recovery asserted by either party.").



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1 settlement); *Spann v. J.C. Penney Corp.* (C.D. Cal. 2016) 211 F. Supp. 3d 1244, 1256 (uncertainty
2 concerning defendant's financial stability "strongly supports the reasonableness of the
3 settlement"); *Laguna v. Coverall N. Am., Inc.*, Case No. 12-55479 (9th Cir. June 3, 2014) 2014
4 WL 2465049, * 3.

5 **2. Allocation of the PAGA Payment**

6 The settlement of PAGA penalties in the sum of \$5,000.00, of which 75% (\$3,750.00)
7 will be paid to the LWDA and 25% (\$1,250.00) will be distributed to the Aggrieved Employees,
8 is reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances. The Parties negotiated a good faith amount
9 for PAGA Penalties to be paid to the LWDA and to the Aggrieved Employees. The portion to be
10 paid to the LWDA was not the result of self-interest at the expense of other Aggrieved Employees.
11 DS, ¶ 44. Where settlements "negotiate[] a good faith amount" for PAGA penalties and "there is
12 no indication that this amount was the result of self-interest at the expense of other Class
13 Members," such amounts are generally considered reasonable. *Hopson v. Hanesbrands Inc.* (N.D.
14 Cal. Apr. 3, 2009) No. CV-08-0844 EDL, 2009 WL 928133, at *9. Likewise, where the employer
15 did not act willfully, and made good faith attempts to comply with wage and hour laws, a
16 reduction or lesser penalty is warranted because imposing maximum PAGA penalty for each
17 violation would have been unjust, arbitrary, and oppressive. *Id. Carrington v. Starbucks Corp.*
18 (2018) 30 Cal.App.5th 504, 528-529 (affirming trial court's award of only 10% of maximum
19 PAGA penalty for meal break violations). *Id.* The amount to be paid to the LWDA comports with
20 PAGA settlement amounts approved by other courts. See, e.g., *Chu v. Wells Fargo Investments,*
21 *LLC* (N.D. Cal., Feb. 16, 2011) 2011 WL 67245, 81 (approving PAGA payment of \$7,500 to
22 LWDA out of \$6.9 million common fund); *Lazarin v. Pro Unlimited, Inc.* (N.D. Cal., July 11,
23 2013) 2013 WL 3541217 (approving PAGA payment of \$7,500 to LWDA out of \$1.25 million
24 common fund settlement); *Hopson v. Hanesbrands, Inc.* (N.D. Cal. Aug. 8, 2008) 2008 WL
25 3385452, at *1 (approving PAGA settlement of 0.3% or \$1,500); see *Nordstrom Com. Cases*
26 (2010) 186 Cal.App.4th 576, 589 (approving PAGA settlement and release that allocated \$0 to
27 PAGA claim). Courts have also approved settlements for \$20,000 or less. See, e.g., *Hicks v. Toys*
28 *'R' Us-Delaware, Inc.*, (C.D. Cal. Sept. 2, 2014) 2014 WL 4703915, at *1 (approving \$5,000
PAGA payment in a case involving \$4 million settlement); *Franco v. Ruiz Food Prods., Inc.* (E.D.
Cal. Nov. 27, 2012) 2012 WL 5941801 at *14 (approving PAGA penalties of \$10,000 as part of
\$2.5 million settlement); *Garcia v. Gordon Trucking* (E.D. Cal. Oct. 31, 2012) 2012 WL 5364575,



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at *3 (approving PAGA payment of \$10,000 as part of \$3.7 million common-fund settlement).
Id.

3. Presence of Governmental Participant

As required under Labor Code section 2699(1)(2), Plaintiff will provide notice of this settlement to the LWDA with the filing and service of this motion. DS, ¶ 71, Ex. 21.

VI. THE SETTLEMENT FAIRLY, ADEQUATELY, AND REASONABLY COMPENSATE CLASS MEMBERS BECAUSE IT WILL PAY EACH CLASS MEMBERS BASED ON THE POTENTIAL EXTENT OF HIS OR HER INJURY COMPARED TO OTHER CLASS MEMBERS

The Individual Settlement Payments will be paid to each Class Members based on his or her eligible Work Weeks compared to the total Work Weeks. Because this method compensates Class Members based on the extent of their potential injuries, in that Class Members who worked for Defendant longer would have been subject to more alleged violations, it is fair, adequate, and reasonable. DS, ¶ 66.

Defendant estimates that there are 19,396 Work Weeks for the Class Period. So, each Work Week has a value of approximately \$9.78 (\$189,666.67 Net Settlement Amount / 19,396 Work Weeks = \$9.78). Plaintiff had 22 Work Weeks during the Class Period. Based on this, it is anticipated that Plaintiff Maria De La Luna Huerta will receive a Individual Class Payment of approximately \$215.13 as a Participating Class Member (22 Work Week x \$9.78 = \$215.13) while the average estimated Individual Class Payment to Participating Class Members will be approximately \$777.32. Some Class Members – those who worked more Work Weeks during the Class Period - will receive more, and some less. The highest possible Individual Class Payment to a Participating Class Member (i.e., to those who qualify for all Work Weeks in the Class Period) will be approximately \$4,070.70. The lowest possible Individual Class Payment to a Participating Class Member (i.e., to those who qualify for only one Work Week in the Class Period) will be approximately \$9.78. Some Class Members – those who worked more Work Weeks during the Class Period - will receive more, and some less. DS, ¶ 65.

It is anticipated that the average Aggrieved Employees Individual PAGA Payments will be \$5.12. Plaintiff's Individual PAGA Payments, her individual share of 25% of the PAGA Penalties, will be less than that of some absent Aggrieved Employees. Under the Settlement, each Aggrieved Employees will receive a *pro rata* distribution of 25% of the PAGA Penalties proportionate to the number of paychecks he or she had with Defendant during the PAGA Period, compared to the total of all paychecks of all Aggrieved Employees during the PAGA Period, as



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1 reflected by Defendant's records. Plaintiff estimates that there are 12,974 Aggrieved Employees
2 paychecks for the PAGA Period. So, each Aggrieved Employees paycheck from the PAGA
3 Period has a value of approximately \$0.10 (25% of \$5,000.00 in PAGA Penalties / 12,974
4 Aggrieved Employees paychecks = \$0.10). It is anticipated that Plaintiff Maria De La Luna
5 Huerta will receive a Individual PAGA Payments of approximately \$2.2 as an Aggrieved
6 Employees (22 paychecks during the PAGA Period x \$0.10 paycheck value = \$2.2) while the
7 average estimated Individual PAGA Payments to an Aggrieved Employees will be approximately
8 \$5.12 (\$1,250.00, 25% of PAGA Penalties / 244 Aggrieved Employees during the PAGA Period
9 = \$5.12 Individual PAGA Payments). Some Aggrieved Employees – those who had more
10 paychecks during the PAGA Period - will receive more, and some less. The highest possible
11 Individual PAGA Payments to an Aggrieved Employees (i.e., to those who qualify for all
12 paychecks in the PAGA Period) will be approximately \$25.23. The lowest possible Individual
13 PAGA Payments to an Aggrieved Employees (i.e., to those who qualify for only one paycheck in
14 the PAGA Period) will be approximately \$0.10. DS, ¶ 67.

15 **VII. ALLOCATION FOR CLASS COUNSEL'S FEE AWARD AND ATTORNEYS'**
16 **FEES AND COSTS AWARD FOR LITIGATION EXPENSES IS APPROPRIATE**

17 The Settlement states Class Counsel may seek attorneys' fees of \$113,333.33 (one-third
18 of the GSA) and up to \$15,000.00 for actual reasonable litigation costs and expenses incurred in
19 prosecuting the Action. These amounts are reasonable, given the facts and circumstances of the
20 case. DS, ¶¶ 45-52, Exhibit 11.

21 Trial courts have "wide latitude" in assessing the value of attorneys' fees and their
22 decisions will "not be disturbed on appeal absent a manifest abuse of discretion." *Lealao v.*
23 *Beneficial Cal., Inc.* (2000) 82 Cal. App. 4th 19, 41. Indeed, it is long settled that the "experienced
24 trial judge is the best judge of the value of professional services rendered in his court." *Ketchum*
25 *v. Moses* (2001) 24 Cal. 4th 1122, 1132. California law provides that attorney fee awards should
26 be equivalent to fees paid in the legal marketplace to compensate for the result achieved and risk
27 incurred. *Laffitte v. Robert Half Intl, Inc.* (2016) 1 Cal. 5th 480, 503 (citing *Lealao, supra*, 82
28 Cal.App.4th at p. 48-49). The Supreme Court has recently approved fees equal to one-third (1/3)
of the common fund. *Laffitte, supra*, 1 Cal. 5th 480. Many courts have similarly approved fee
awards equal to or greater than the percentage requested here. *See, e.g., In re Pacific Enterprises*
(9th Cir. 1995) 47 F.3d 373, 379 (award of 33% of the common fund); *In re Activision* (N.D.
Cal. 1989) 723 F.Supp. 1373, 1375 (32.8% of the common fund); *In re Ampicillin Antitrust*



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1 *Litig.* (D.D.C. 1981) 526 F.Supp. 494, 498 (45% of settlement fund).

2 The amount of fees and costs requested are commensurate with (1) the risk Class Counsel
3 took in bringing the case, (2) the extensive time, effort and expense dedicated to the case, (3) the
4 skill and determination Class Counsel has shown, (4) the results Class Counsel achieved, (5) the
5 value of the Class Counsel achieved for the class, and (6) the other cases Class Counsel turned
6 down to devote time to this matter. DS, ¶ 46. Class Counsel interviewed and obtained information
7 from putative class members, met and conferred with Defendant's counsel on numerous
8 occasions, reviewed and analyzed hundreds of pages of data and documents provided by
9 Defendant and obtained through other sources, researched applicable law, and provided
estimates of "damages" for purposes of settlement discussions, among other tasks. *Id.*

10 Class Counsel have borne all the risks and costs of litigation and will receive no
11 compensation until recovery is obtained. DS, ¶ 47. Class Counsel are well-experienced in wage-
12 and-hour class action litigation and used that experience to obtain a fair result for the Class. *Id.*
13 Considering the amount of the attorney fees requested, the work performed, and the risks incurred,
14 the requested fees and costs are reasonable and should be awarded. *Id.*

15 **VIII. THE CLASS REPRESENTATIVE SERVICE PAYMENT TO PLAINTIFF**
16 **SHOULD BE PRELIMINARILY APPROVED BECAUSE IT IS FAIR,**
17 **ADEQUATE, AND REASONABLE**

18 Courts routinely approve incentive awards to compensate named plaintiffs for the services
19 they provide and the risks they incur during class action litigation, often in much higher amounts
20 than that sought here. *See, e.g., Bell v. Farmers Ins. Exchange* (2004) 115 Cal.App.4th 715, 726
21 (upholding "service payments" to named plaintiffs for their efforts in bringing the case); *Van*
22 *Vranken v. Atlantic Richfield Co.* (N.D.Cal. 1995) 901 F.Supp. 294 (approving \$50,000
23 enhancement award). The Settlement provides that Plaintiff may seek an Class Representative
24 Service Payment of \$5,000.00. This amount is entirely reasonable given Plaintiff's efforts in this
25 action and the risks she undertook on behalf of Class Members. DS, ¶ 53; Declaration of Maria
26 De La Luna Huerta ("Plaintiff decl."), generally. Plaintiff has devoted many hours advancing the
27 interests of the Settlement Class. Plaintiff has done this by, among other things, retaining
28 experienced counsel, providing them with information about her work history with Defendant
and Defendant's policies and practices with respect to the wage and hour claims at issue, and
being actively involved in the settlement process to ensure a fair result for the Settlement Class
as a whole. In doing this, Plaintiff has been exposed to significant risks, including the risk of an



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1 order to pay Defendant's attorneys' fees and costs if this action had been unsuccessful (*See* Labor
2 Code §§ 218.5-218.6). The efforts and risks that Plaintiff undertook on behalf of the Settlement
3 Class shows that the proposed Class Representative Service Payment is fair, adequate, and
4 reasonable, and thus warrants preliminary approval. DS, ¶¶ 53-63, Exs. 12-17; Plaintiff decl.,
generally.

5 As discussed above, prior to being named as a Plaintiff, on or about June 22, 2025, Huerta
6 notified the LWDA, pursuant to the California Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, California
7 Labor Code sections 2698, *et seq.* ("PAGA"), of alleged Labor Code violations committed by
8 Defendants. The substituted representative may prosecute and settle both the class and PAGA
9 claims for the limitations periods established by the original plaintiff's LWDA notice and original
10 filing date. The leading California authority on PAGA representative substitution and relation
11 back is *Hutcheson v. Superior Court* (2022) 74 Cal.App.5th 932, decided by the First District
12 Court of Appeal. *Hutcheson* held that the relation-back doctrine applies to an amended PAGA
13 complaint substituting a new representative plaintiff even where the new plaintiff submitted her
14 LWDA notice after the original complaint was filed, so long as the amended complaint rests on
15 the same general set of facts, involves the same injury, and refers to the same instrumentality as
the original complaint. (*Ibid.*)

16 "In sum, we conclude that if the trial court finds that the claims in the amended PAGA complaint
17 here rest on the same general set of facts, involve the same injury, and refer to the same
18 instrumentality as the claims in the original complaint filed by Van Steenhuyse ... then the
19 relation back doctrine applies, and Hutcheson can assert claims on behalf of the LWDA for
20 violations going back to December 22, 2016." *Id.* at p. 945. The court in *Hutcheson* articulated
21 the critical rule: "the mere fact that Hutcheson's PAGA notice was submitted after Van
22 Steenhuyse's does not bar the application of the doctrine of relation back to an amended
23 complaint that seeks to substitute Hutcheson as the representative plaintiff in this action." *Id.* The
24 court further held that "[t]he submission of notice to the LWDA and the employer is a mandatory
25 precondition for acting as plaintiff in a PAGA suit, and Hutcheson met that requirement before
26 he became a plaintiff in his own suit, and before he became a plaintiff in the suit that Van
27 Steenhuyse had filed." *Id.*, at 941.

28 The court's reasoning in *Hutcheson* rested on two pillars. First, the LWDA remained the
real party in interest throughout, and the LWDA and the employer had notice of the alleged



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1 violations at issue in this case since Van Steenhuyse submitted his notice in December 2017. *Id.*,
2 at 944. Second, denying relation back would weaken the punitive and deterrent force of PAGA,
3 contrary to PAGA’s goal of strengthening Labor Code enforcement. *Id.*, at 944 (quoting *Kim v.*
4 *Reins International California, Inc.* (2020) 9 Cal.5th 73, 88.)

5 Under Labor Code section 2699.3, subdivision (a)(1)(A), a civil action by an aggrieved
6 employee may commence only after the aggrieved employee or representative gives written
7 notice by online filing with the LWDA and by certified mail to the employer of the specific
8 provisions of the Labor Code alleged to have been violated, including the facts and theories to
9 support the alleged violation. Lab. Code, § 2699.3, subd. (a)(1)(A). This notice requirement is a
10 mandatory precondition to suit. *Esparza v. Safeway, Inc.* (2019) 36 Cal.App.5th 42, 59. However,
11 as *Hutcheson* and *Ramirez* make clear, the exhaustion requirement is a precondition to suit, not
12 a jurisdictional bar, and it does not affect the date that a PAGA claim accrues. *Hutcheson*, 74
13 Cal.App.5th at 941; *Ramirez v. Ghilotti Bros. Inc.* (N.D.Cal. 2013) 941 F.Supp.2d 1197, 1210.
14 The federal district court in *Ramirez* held that “PAGA’s administrative exhaustion requirement
15 is a precondition to suit, but it does not affect the date that a plaintiff’s PAGA claim accrues.” *Id.*
16 The consequence is that once the substituted plaintiff has independently satisfied the exhaustion
17 requirement — as the new representative here did by filing her own LWDA notice in June 2025
18 — she may rely on relation back to recover civil penalties for the period running from the original
19 plaintiff’s LWDA notice date in September 2022.

20 The notice requirement “serves two purposes: it allows the LWDA to decide whether to
21 allocate scarce resources to an investigation, and it allows the employer to submit a response to
22 the LWDA which can inform the agency’s decision.” *Hutcheson*, 74 Cal.App.5th at 943 (internal
23 citations and quotations omitted). Both purposes are satisfied here: the LWDA and the employer
24 have had notice of the alleged violations since the original plaintiff’s September 2022 notice, and
25 the new representative’s June 2025 notice independently confirmed those violations. The
26 substitution does not expand the scope of the original complaint; it merely changes the identity
27 of the representative plaintiff while the LWDA remains the real party in interest.

28 The original plaintiff’s continued presence in the action as a named party and absent class
member strengthens, rather than undermines, the case for relation back. In *Shapell Industries,*
Inc. v. Superior Court (2005) 132 Cal.App.4th 1101, the California Court of Appeal held that the
dismissal of a named representative plaintiff does not result in the dismissal of the entire action,



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1 because the absent class members remain parties interested in the action sufficient to perpetuate
2 it. *Id.* at 1108. If even a complete voluntary dismissal of the original representative does not
3 terminate the class action, the original representative's mere non-participation — while remaining
4 a named party — certainly does not defeat the action or the relation-back doctrine.

5 The *Hutcheson* court specifically noted that the substitution of the new plaintiff for the
6 original plaintiff does not expand the scope of the original complaint, and that the LWDA remains
7 the real party in interest. *Hutcheson*, 74 Cal.App.5th at 941. The original plaintiff's continued
8 presence as a named party and absent class member confirms that the action has not been
9 terminated and that the class claims remain live.

10 The most direct authority supporting the settlement's use of the original plaintiff's notice
11 date and filing date as the anchor for the class and PAGA periods is *Amaro v. Anaheim Arena*
12 *Management, LLC* (2021) 69 Cal.App.5th 521. In *Amaro*, the California Court of Appeal held
13 that nothing in the PAGA statute prohibits a named plaintiff from releasing PAGA claims outside
14 the limitations period of her own claim, and that this practice is not contrary to PAGA's purposes.
15 *Id.*, at 528. The court established the foundational principle: the PAGA statute of limitations is
16 an affirmative defense meant to facilitate the LWDA's investigation and the employer's response.
17 It is not jurisdictional. *Id.*, at 541-542. Because the statute of limitations is not jurisdictional, it
18 was within the defendant's discretion to waive its statute of limitations defense so the plaintiff
19 could release class members' PAGA claims dating back to December 2010 — approximately six
20 years before the plaintiff's own LWDA notice. *Id.* at 542. The court grounded this holding in the
21 general rule that “[i]n civil cases, the statute of limitations is not jurisdictional but merely serves
22 a procedural function and constitutes an affirmative defense that is waived unless pleaded and
23 proved.” *Amaro*, 69 Cal.App.5th at 541 (quoting *People v. Williams* (1999) 77 Cal.App.4th 436,
24 457-458.) A defendant who affirmatively stipulates to a settlement covering a broader period has,
25 a fortiori, waived the defense.

26 The *Amaro* court did impose one limiting principle: a trial court may still refuse to
27 approve such a release if it is unfair given the circumstances of the case. *Amaro*, 69 Cal.App.5th
28 at 543. The court identified the relevant fairness factors as whether the named plaintiff's notice
deprived or interfered with the LWDA's opportunity to investigate, whether the employer had
an opportunity to respond, and whether the settlement amount is adequate. *Id.* In the present case,
the original plaintiff's September 2022 LWDA notice provided the LWDA and the employer with



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1 full notice of the alleged violations; the employer had the opportunity to respond; and the
2 settlement was negotiated at arm's length. The *Amaro* fairness factors are satisfied.

3 Further, under the doctrine announced by the Supreme Court in *American Pipe &*
4 *Construction Company v. Utah*, “the commencement of the original class action suit tolls the
5 running of the statute for all purported members of the class who make timely motions to
6 intervene after the court has found the suit inappropriate for class action status.” *American Pipe*
7 *& Construction Company v. Utah* (1974) 414 U.S. 538, 553. In *Crown, Cork & Seal Co. v. Parker*,
8 the Court extended this doctrine to include individual members of the putative class, such that the
9 statute of limitations is tolled as of the commencement of the suit as to all asserted members of
10 the class who seek not only to intervene after denial of class certification, but also to file their
11 own actions: “once the statute of limitations has been tolled, it remains tolled for all members of
12 the putative class until class certification is denied.” *See Crown, Cork & Seal Co. v. Parker* (1983)
13 462 U.S. 345, 353-354. Plaintiff Perez’s lawsuit, which was filed on September 19, 2022,
14 therefore, tolled the statute of limitations for all members of the putative class, including Plaintiff
15 Huerta. Further, the Parties are allowed to bargain for and consent to the terms of the settlement,
16 including the Class and PAGA periods. Therefore, by virtue of the settlement agreement, the
17 Parties agreed, stipulated, and consented that the Class and PAGA Periods will cover the class
18 period as tolled by the initial lawsuit and the PAGA notice sent by Perez.

19 **IX. THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION COSTS SHOULD BE**
20 **PRELIMINARILY APPROVED BECAUSE THEY ARE FAIR, ADEQUATE,**
21 **AND REASONABLE**

22 With regard to the settlement administration costs provision, it is reasonable. Before
23 agreeing to Apex Class Action and its bid of \$10,250.00, the Parties sought and reviewed bids
24 from other reputable third-party administrators which provided higher bids. DS, ¶ 69-70, Exs. 18,
25 19, and 20. Thus, the settlement administration costs provision should be given preliminary
26 approval.

27 **X. THE PROPOSED NOTICE AND SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION PLAN**
28 **SHOULD BE APPROVED BECAUSE IT IS REASONABLY CALCULATED TO**
GIVE ACTUAL NOTICE TO CLASS MEMBERS AND SUFFICIENT TIME TO
EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS

This Court should approve the proposed plans for giving notice to the Settlement Class
and administering the Settlement. The standard for determining the adequacy of notice is whether
the notice has “a reasonable chance of reaching a substantial percentage of the class members.”



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1 *Cartt v. Superior Court* (1975) 50 Cal.App.3d 960, 974. The notice process includes multiple
2 measures to ensure that as many Class Members as practicable receive actual notice of the
3 Settlement and have enough time to exercise their rights. The Settlement requires distribution of
4 the Notice by First Class U.S. mail only. Settlement, ¶ 4.4.1. Although there are current employee
5 Class Members, it is uncertain whether Defendant's records of their contact information include
6 email addresses and Class Members, who perform all of their work away from a desk, are not in
7 a position to check their emails. As such, notice by mail alone is fair, adequate, and reasonable.
DS, ¶ 68.

8 With respect to its content, "[The] notice given to the class must fairly apprise the class
9 members of the terms of the proposed compromise and of the options open to dissenting class
10 members." *Trotsky v. Los Angeles Fed. Sav. & Loan Assn.* (1975) 48 Cal.App.3d 134, 151-152.
11 The purpose of the notice in class settlement context is to give class members sufficient
12 information to decide whether they should accept the benefits offered, opt out and pursue their
13 own remedies, or object to the settlement. *Id.* The Notice (Exhibit A to the Settlement) provides
14 Class Members with all pertinent information, both in English and Spanish, that they need to fully
15 evaluate their options and exercise their rights under the Settlement. Specifically, it clearly and
16 concisely explains, among other things: (1) what the Settlement is about; (2) who is a Settlement
17 Class Members; (3) how Class Counsel will be paid; (4) how to submit an exclusion request not
18 to be bound by the Settlement; (5) how to object to the Settlement; (6) how the Settlement will
19 be allocated; (7) how payments to Class Members will be calculated; (8) how the disputes will be
20 resolved; and (9) the individual Settlement Class Members's estimated payment. Additionally,
21 the Class Notice will include the number of Work Weeks a Class Members had during the Class
22 Period. Accordingly, the Notice should be approved because it describes the Settlement with
23 sufficient clarity and specificity to explain to Class Members what this action is about, their rights
under the Settlement, and how to exercise those rights. DS, ¶ 68.

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1 **XI. CONCLUSION**

2 For the reasons stated above, this Court should grant Plaintiff's Motion in its entirety and
3 adopt the proposed order submitted concurrently herewith.

4 Respectfully submitted,

5 THE SPIVAK LAW FIRM

6
7 Dated: September 9, 2026

By:



8 DAVID G. SPIVAK, Attorneys for
9 Plaintiff, MARIA DE LA LUNA
10 HUERTA, and all others similarly
11 situated



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