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ELECTRONICALLY FILED
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
SAN BERNARDINO DISTRICT
7/22/2025 8:41 AM
By: Sarena Perez, DEPUTY

Attorneys for Plaintiff, individually,
and on behalf of all others similarly situated.

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

RAFAEL PRIETO, individually and on
behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

VALTA ENERGY LLC; and DOES 1
through 20, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No. CIVSB2521069

COMPLAINT FOR:

1. Enforcement of Labor Code § 2698 *et seq.*
("PAGA")

1 Plaintiff Rafael Prieto, individually and on behalf of others similarly situated, alleges as
2 follows:

3 **NATURE OF ACTION AND INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

4 1. Plaintiff Rafael Prieto (“Plaintiff”) brings this representative action pursuant to
5 the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, Cal. Lab. Code. § 2698 *et seq.*, against defendants
6 Valta Energy LLC and DOES 1 through 20, inclusive (collectively, “Defendants”), on Plaintiff’s
7 own behalf and on behalf of persons who are and were employed by any or all Defendants as
8 non-exempt employees throughout California.

9 2. Defendants provide services or goods throughout California.

10 3. Through this action, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants engaged in a systematic
11 pattern of wage and hour violations under the California Labor Code and Industrial Welfare
12 Commission (“IWC”) Wage Orders, all of which contribute to Defendants’ deliberate unfair
13 competition.

14 4. Plaintiff is informed and believe, and thereon alleges, that Defendants have
15 increased their profits by violating state wage and hour laws by, among other things:

- 16 (a) failing to pay all wages (including minimum wages and overtime wages);
- 17 (b) failing to provide lawful meal periods or compensation in lieu thereof;
- 18 (c) failing to authorize or permit lawful rest breaks or provide compensation
19 in lieu thereof;
- 20 (d) failing to reimburse necessary business-related costs;
- 21 (e) failing to provide accurate itemized wage statements;
- 22 (f) failing to pay wages timely during employment; and
- 23 (g) failing to pay all wages due upon separation of employment.

24 5. Plaintiff seeks civil penalties against Defendants on behalf of Plaintiff and all
25 others similarly situated in California for violations of Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 210,
26 226, 226.3, 226.7, 246, 510, 512, 558, 1174, 1174.5, 1182.12, 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1197.1 1198,
27 2800, 2802, 2698, *et seq.*, and Code of California Civil Procedure § 1021.5.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

6. The monetary damages and restitution sought by Plaintiff exceed the minimal jurisdictional limits of the Superior Court and will be established according to proof at trial.

7. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to the California Constitution, Article VI, § 10, which grants the Superior Court original jurisdiction in all causes except those given by statutes to other courts. The statutes under which this action is brought do not specify any other basis for jurisdiction.

8. This Court has jurisdiction over all Defendants because, upon information and belief, they are citizens of California, have sufficient minimum contacts in California, or otherwise intentionally avail themselves of the California market so as to render the exercise of jurisdiction over them by the California courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

9. Venue is proper in this Court because, upon information and belief, Defendants reside, transact business, or have offices in this county, and the acts and omissions alleged herein took place in this county.

THE PARTIES

10. Plaintiff is a resident of California and worked for Defendants during the relevant time periods as alleged herein.

11. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges that at all times hereinafter mentioned, Defendants were and are subject to the Labor Code and IWC Wage Orders as employers, whose employees were and are engaged throughout this county and the State of California.

12. Plaintiff is unaware of the true names or capacities of the defendants sued herein under the fictitious names DOES 1 through 20, but will seek leave of this Court to amend this Complaint and serve such fictitiously named defendants once their names and capacities become known.

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13. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that DOES 1 through 20 are or were the partners, agents, owners, shareholders, managers, or employees of Defendants at all relevant times.

14. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that each defendant acted in all respects pertinent to this action as the agent of the other defendant, carried out a joint scheme, business plan, or policy in all respects pertinent hereto, and the acts of each defendant are legally attributable to the other defendant. Furthermore, defendants in all respects acted as the employer and/or joint employer of Plaintiff and the aggrieved employees.

15. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that each and all of the acts and omissions alleged herein were performed by, or are attributable to, Defendants and/or DOES 1 through 20, acting as the agent or alter ego for the other, with legal authority to act on the other's behalf. The acts of any and all Defendants were in accordance with, and represent, the official policy of Defendants.

16. At all relevant times, Defendants, and each of them, acted within the scope of such agency or employment, or ratified each and every act or omission complained of herein. At all relevant times, Defendants, and each of them, aided and abetted the acts and omissions of each and all the other Defendants in proximately causing the damages herein alleged.

17. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that each of said Defendants is in some manner intentionally, negligently, or otherwise responsible for the acts, omissions, occurrences, and transactions alleged herein.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

18. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants employed Plaintiff and other California residents as non-exempt employees throughout California.

19. Defendants continue to employ non-exempt employees within California.

20. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that at all times herein mentioned, Defendants were advised by skilled lawyers, employees, and other professionals who were knowledgeable about California's wage and hour laws, employment and personnel practices, and the requirements of California law.

1 21. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendants knew or
2 should have known that Plaintiff and Aggrieved employees were entitled to receive wages for all
3 time worked (including minimum wages and overtime wages) and that they were not receiving
4 all wages earned for work that was required to be performed. In violation of the Labor Code and
5 IWC Wage Orders, Defendants did not pay Plaintiff and Aggrieved employees all wages owed
6 (including minimum wages and overtime wages) for all hours worked at the correct rate and
7 within the correct time period.

8 22. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendants knew or
9 should have known that Plaintiff and Aggrieved employees were entitled to receive all required
10 meal periods or payment of one (1) additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's and Aggrieved
11 employees' regular rate of pay when they did not receive a timely, uninterrupted meal period. In
12 violation of the Labor Code and IWC Wage Orders, Defendants did not provide Plaintiff and
13 Aggrieved employees all meal periods or payment of one (1) additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's
14 and Aggrieved employees' regular rate of pay when they did not receive a timely, uninterrupted
15 meal period.

16 23. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendants knew or
17 should have known that Plaintiff and Aggrieved employees were entitled to receive all rest
18 breaks or payment of one (1) additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's and Aggrieved employees'
19 regular rate of pay when a rest break was late, missed, or interrupted. In violation of the Labor
20 Code and IWC Wage Orders, Defendants did not authorize or permit all rest breaks for Plaintiff
21 and Aggrieved employees or payment of one (1) additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's and
22 Aggrieved employees' regular rate of pay when a rest break was missed, late, or interrupted.

23 24. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendants knew or
24 should have known that Plaintiff and Aggrieved employees were entitled to reimbursement
25 and/or indemnification for all necessary business expenditures or losses as a direct consequence
26 of the discharge of their duties, or of their obedience to the directions of Defendants. In violation
27 of the Labor Code and IWC Wage Orders, Plaintiff and Aggrieved employees incurred necessary
28 business expenses or losses, but Defendants did not reimburse nor indemnify such expenses or

1 losses that were incurred as a direct consequence of the discharge of their duties, or of their
2 obedience to the directions of Defendants.

3 25. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendants knew or
4 should have known that Plaintiff and Aggrieved employees were entitled to receive itemized
5 wage statements that accurately showed the following information pursuant to the Labor Code:
6 (1) gross wages earned; (2) total hours worked by the employee; (3) the number of piece-rate
7 units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis; (4) all
8 deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the employee may be
9 aggregated and shown as one item; (5) net wages earned; (6) the inclusive dates of the period for
10 which the employee is paid; (7) the name of the employee and only the last four digits of his or
11 her social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security
12 number; (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer; and (9) all applicable
13 hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at
14 each hourly rate by the employee. In violation of the Labor Code, Defendants did not provide
15 Plaintiff and Aggrieved employees with accurate itemized wage statements.

16 26. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendants knew or
17 should have known that the Aggrieved employees were entitled to timely payment of wages due
18 upon separation of employment. In violation of the Labor Code, Defendants did not pay Plaintiff
19 and the Aggrieved employees all wages within the permissible time periods.

20 27. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that Defendants knew or
21 should have known they had a duty to compensate Plaintiff and Aggrieved employees, and
22 Defendants had the financial ability to pay such compensation but willfully, knowingly, and
23 intentionally failed to do so in order to increase Defendants' profits.

24 28. Therefore, Plaintiff brings this lawsuit seeking civil penalties, attorneys' fees, and
25 costs.

26 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

27 **ENFORCEMENT OF LABOR CODE §§ 2698 *ET SEQ.* ("PAGA")**

1 29. Plaintiff hereby re-alleges and incorporate by reference the previous paragraphs
2 as though fully set forth herein.

3 30. Pursuant to Labor Code § 2699(a), any provision of the Labor Code that provides
4 for a civil penalty to be assessed and collected by the Labor and Workforce Development
5 Agency (“LWDA”) or any of its departments, divisions, commissions, boards, agencies, or
6 employees for violation of the Labor Code may, as an alternative, be recovered through a civil
7 action brought by an aggrieved employee on behalf of himself or herself and other current or
8 former employees pursuant to the procedures specified in Labor Code § 2699.3.

9 31. For all provisions of the Labor Code except those for which a civil penalty is
10 specifically provided, Labor Code § 2699(f) imposes upon Defendants a penalty of one hundred
11 dollars (\$100.00) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial violation and two
12 hundred dollars (\$200.00) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent pay
13 period in which Defendants violated these provisions of the Labor Code.

14 32. Defendants’ conduct violates numerous Wage Order and Labor Code sections,
15 including, but not limited to, the following:

- 16 a. violation of Labor Code §§ 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 246, 510, 1182.12,
17 1194, 1197, and 1198 for failure to timely pay all earned wages at the
18 correct rate (including minimum wage, sick pay, and overtime wages)
19 owed to Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees during employment and
20 upon separation of employment as herein alleged;
- 21 b. violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512 for failure to provide meal
22 periods to Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees and failure to pay
23 premium wages for missed meal periods as herein alleged;
- 24 c. violation of Labor Code § 226.7 for failure to permit rest breaks to
25 Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees and failure to pay premium
26 wages for missed rest periods as herein alleged;

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- d. violation of Labor Code § 226 for failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements to Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees as herein alleged;
- e. violation of Labor Code §§ 1174 and 1174.5 for failure to maintain accurate and complete records showing, among other things, the hours worked daily by and the wages paid to Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees; and
- f. violation of Labor Code §§ 2800 and 2802 for failure to reimburse Plaintiff and other aggrieved employees for necessary business expenses as herein alleged.

33. Plaintiff is an “aggrieved employee” because he was employed by the alleged violator and had one or more of the violations committed against him, and therefore is properly suited to represent the interests of all other aggrieved employees.

34. Plaintiff has exhausted the procedural requirements under Labor Code § 2699.3 as to Defendants and is therefore able to pursue a claim for penalties on behalf of himself and all other aggrieved employees under PAGA.

35. Pursuant to Labor Code §§ 2699(a), 2699.3 and 2699.5, Plaintiff is entitled to recover civil penalties, in addition to other remedies, for violations of the Labor Code sections cited above.

36. For bringing this action, Plaintiff is entitled to attorney’s fees and costs incurred herein.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

On Plaintiff’s own behalf and on behalf of all others similarly situated, Plaintiff prays for relief and judgment against Defendants, jointly and severally, as follows:

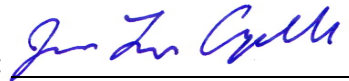
1. For civil penalties;
2. For reasonable attorneys’ fees, costs of suit, and interest to the extent permitted by law, including, but not limited to, Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5 and Labor Code §§ 2698 *et seq.*; and

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3. For such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Dated: July 22, 2025

AEGIS LAW FIRM, PC

By: 

Jessica L. Campbell
Attorneys for Plaintiff