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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF COLUSA

MARIA GALVAN, individually, and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

CALIFORNIA HERITAGE MILLS, INC., a California corporation; and DOES 1 to 10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: CV24645

[Assigned for All Purposes to the Honorable Brendan M. Farrell, Dept. 1]

PLAINTIFF'S NOTICE OF MOTION AND MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION AND PAGA SETTLEMENT; MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES

Preliminary Approval Hearing:
Date: December 1, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Dept.: 1

Action Filed: December 29, 2022
Trial date: Not set

TO ALL PARTIES AND THEIR ATTORNEYS OF RECORD:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on December 1, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard in Department 1 of the Superior Court of California, County of Colusa, located at 547 Market Street, Colusa, CA 95932, Plaintiff Maria Galvan (Jr.) ("Plaintiff"), as successor in interest to Maria Ramirez De Galvan ("Decedent"), will and hereby does move this Court for an Order:

1. Granting preliminary approval of the proposed Class Action and PAGA Settlement Agreement and Class Notice ("Settlement Agreement");
2. Approving the PAGA settlement, including the allocation of $10,000.00 to PAGA penalties (75% to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency and 25% to Aggrieved Employees), pursuant to Labor Code section 2699;
3. Conditionally certifying the proposed Class for settlement purposes only;
4. Appointing Plaintiff as the Class Representative;
5. Appointing Wilshire Law Firm, PLC as Class Counsel ("Class Counsel");
6. Appointing Apex Class Action Administration as the Administrator; and
7. Setting a final approval hearing date.

Pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure § 382 and California Rules of Court 3.769, *et seq*., this Motion is made on the grounds that the proposed Settlement satisfies all criteria for preliminary approval and falls well within the range of reasonableness, and that the PAGA settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate in light of PAGA's purposes. The Settlement was reached through informed, arm's length bargaining between experienced attorneys with the assistance of an experienced neutral, and Plaintiff and Plaintiff's Counsel will fairly and adequately represent the Class.

This Motion is based on this Notice of Motion, the accompanying Memorandum of Points and Authorities ("MPA"), the Declaration of Arrash T. Fattahi, and on all records and documents on file, together with such oral and documentary evidence that may be presented at the hearing on this matter.

/ / /

[*Signature on the following page*]

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: October 29, 2026

WILSHIRE LAW FIRM, PLC

By: _____

Arrash T. Fattahi
Arman A. Salehi
Trenten N. Bilodeaux
Attorneys for Plaintiff

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MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure § 382 and California Rules of Court 3.769, *et seq*., Plaintiff seeks preliminary approval of a class action settlement of wage and hour claims, including representative claims brought under the Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 ("PAGA"), against Defendant California Heritage Mills, Inc. ("Defendant"). The proposed Class is defined as all persons employed by Defendant in California and classified as a non-exempt, hourly-paid employee who worked for Defendant ("Class Members") during the period from December 29, 2018 to July 12, 2024 ("Class Period"). The main terms of the Settlement are as follows:

1. A Gross Settlement Amount of $235,000.00, from which the Net Settlement Amount will be distributed to approximately 75 Class Members on a pro rata basis according to the total workweeks worked by each Class Member during the Class Period;
2. Attorneys' fees of up to 33 and 1/3% of the Gross Settlement Amount (currently estimated to be $78,333.33) and up to $25,000.00 in reimbursement of actual litigation expenses incurred by Plaintiff's Counsel;
3. A Class Representative Service Payment of up to $7,500.00 to Plaintiff;
4. Costs of settlement administration of up to $5,000.00; and
5. Allocation of $10,000.00 to PAGA penalties, seventy-five percent (75%) of which ($7,500.00) will be paid to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency ("LWDA"), and twenty-five percent (25%) of which ($2,500.00) will be paid to persons employed by Defendant in California and classified as an hourly-paid, non-exempt employee who worked for Defendant ("Aggrieved Employees") during the period from January 13, 2022, to July 12, 2024 ("PAGA Period").

The Settlement meets all criteria for preliminary approval and falls within the range of reasonableness given the risks and expenses of further litigation. The Settlement was reached through informed, arm's length bargaining between experienced attorneys with the assistance of an experienced neutral. As such, Plaintiff requests that the Court grant preliminary approval of the

Settlement, approve the PAGA settlement, conditionally certify the Class for settlement purposes only, appoint Plaintiff as the Class Representative, appoint Plaintiff's Counsel as Class Counsel, appoint Apex Class Action Administration ("Apex") as the Administrator, authorize the Administrator to administer notice of the Settlement to the Class, and set a final approval hearing date.

II. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On December 29, 2022, Decedent filed this putative class action against Defendant alleging: (1) failure to pay minimum and straight time wages; (2) failure to pay overtime wages; (3) failure to provide meal periods; (4) failure to authorize and permit rest periods; (5) failure to timely pay final wages at termination; (6) failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements; (7) failure to indemnify employees for expenditures; (8) failure to produce requested employment records; and (9) unfair business practices ("Class Action"). Declaration of Arrash T. Fattahi in Support of Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement ("Fattahi Decl.") at ¶ 3.

On January 13, 2023, Decedent provided written notice to the LWDA and Defendant of the specific provisions of the Labor Code alleged to have been violated, including the facts and theories in support. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 4, Exhibit 1. The LWDA did not notify Decedent that it intended to investigate within 65 days of this written notice. *Id*. Therefore, on May 8, 2023, Decedent filed a separate action in the Superior Court of California, County of Colusa, for civil penalties under PAGA, Case No. CV24672 (the "PAGA Action"). *Id.* On June 25, 2024, Decedent appeared for a remote deposition. *Id.* at ¶ 5.

On July 12, 2024, the Parties participated in a private mediation with Kevin T. Barnes. *Id.* at ¶ 6. The mediator made a proposal, which was accepted by the Parties. *Id.*

Decedent, who filed this action under the name Maria Galvan and whose full legal name was Maria Ramirez De Galvan, passed away on March 29, 2025, in Colusa County, California. *Id.* at ¶ 7. Decedent's successors in interest are Maria Galvan (Jr.), Patricia Guadalupe Galvan-Ramirez, and Mauricio Galvan Ramirez. Plaintiff, Decedent's daughter, is authorized to act on behalf of all of Decedent's successors in interest with respect to Decedent's interest in this action. *Id.* On March 23,

2026, the Parties filed a Joint Stipulation to Substitute Successor in Interest, pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure sections 377.31 and 377.32. *Id.* On April 9, 2026, the Court granted the Stipulation, and Plaintiff was substituted into the action in place of Decedent. *Id.*

The Parties negotiated the terms of the Settlement, which was finalized on June 18, 2026. *Id.* at ¶ 8, Exhibit 2. The PAGA cause of action that the Settlement resolves is alleged in the PAGA Action, which is also pending in this Court. As the Settlement Agreement contemplates, Plaintiff intends to file an amended complaint in this action to add the PAGA cause of action and to remove the cause of action for failure to produce requested employment records (the "Operative Complaint"). *See* Settlement Agreement at § 2.1. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 9.

On October 29, 2026, Plaintiff submitted a copy of the Settlement Agreement to the LWDA at the same time it was submitted to the Court. *Id.* at ¶ 10, Exhibit 3. The complaint in the PAGA Action was submitted to the LWDA on November 14, 2023, and Plaintiff will submit the Operative Complaint to the LWDA when it is filed. *Id.* at ¶ 10.

III. SUMMARY OF THE SETTLEMENT TERMS

A. Terms of the Proposed Settlement

The Parties have agreed to settle the claims alleged in this case for a Gross Settlement Amount of $235,000.00. Settlement Agreement at § 3.1. Subject to Court approval, the following payments will be deducted from the Gross Settlement Amount: (1) a Class Representative Service Payment of up to $7,500.00 to Plaintiff; (2) attorneys' fees of up to 33 and 1/3% of the Gross Settlement Amount (currently estimated to be $78,333.33) and reimbursement of litigation costs of up to $25,000.00 to Plaintiff's Counsel; (3) costs of settlement administration of up to $5,000.00 to Apex; (4) Individual Class Payments to Class Members; and (5) PAGA Penalties in the amount of $10,000.00, which will be allocated 75% to the LWDA ($7,500.00) and 25% to Aggrieved Employees ($2,500.00). *Id.* at § 3.2 *et seq*. After all requested deductions are made, the remaining Net Settlement Amount is currently estimated to be $109,166.67.

Individual Class Payments will be calculated by (a) dividing the Net Settlement Amount by the total number of Workweeks worked by all Participating Class Members during the Class Period and (b) multiplying the result by each Participating Class Member's Workweeks. *Id*. at §

3.2.4. For tax purposes, the Individual Class Payments will be allocated 20% to wages and 80% to interest and penalties. *Id*. at § 3.2.4.1. Defendant will separately pay employer payroll taxes owed on the wage portions of the individual class payments separate from the Gross Settlement Amount. *Id*. at § 3.1.

Individual PAGA Payments to Aggrieved Employees will be calculated by (a) dividing the amount of the Aggrieved Employees' 25% share of PAGA Penalties ($2,500.00) by the total number of PAGA Period Pay Periods worked by all Aggrieved Employees during the PAGA Period and (b) multiplying the result by each Aggrieved Employee's PAGA Period Pay Periods. *Id*. at § 3.2.5.1. For tax purposes, the individual PAGA payments will be allocated 100% to penalties. *Id*.

Any deductions not approved by the Court will be retained by the Settlement Administrator in the Net Settlement Amount. *Id.* at §§ 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.5.2. For any Class Member whose Individual Class Payment check or Individual PAGA Payment check is uncashed and cancelled after the void date, the Administrator shall transmit the funds represented by such checks to the California Controller's Unclaimed Property Fund in the name of the Class Member, thereby leaving no "unpaid residue" subject to the requirements of California Code of Civil Procedure Section 384, subd. (b). *Id.* at § 4.4.3. None of the Gross Settlement Amount will revert to Defendant. *Id*. at § 3.1.

B. Proposed Settlement Administration

The Parties' proposed Class Notice complies with the requirements of California Rules of Court, Rule 3.766(d). *See* Exhibit A to Settlement Agreement. It provides information regarding the nature of this lawsuit, a summary of the settlement terms, the formula used for calculating individual class and PAGA payments and instructions to dispute the calculations, instructions on how to opt-out of or object to the Settlement, the date, time, and location of the final approval hearing, and the amounts sought for the class representative service payment, attorneys' fees and litigation costs, and settlement administration costs. *See generally, id*. The Class Notice also notifies Class Members that they do not need to submit a claim in order to participate in the Settlement and receive a payment. *See id*. The Administrator will mail Class Members the Class Notice by first-class mail in English and in Spanish. Settlement Agreement at § 7.4.2.

If a Class Notice is returned as undeliverable, the Settlement Administrator will re-mail the Class Notice within three (3) business days to the forwarding address provided by the U.S. Postal Service. Settlement Agreement at § 7.4.3. If no forwarding address is provided, the Settlement Administrator will conduct a Class Member Address Search and re-mail the Class Notice to the most current address obtained. *Id.* The deadlines for Class Members' written objections, Challenges to Workweeks and/or Pay Periods, and Requests for Exclusion will be extended an additional 14 days beyond the 45 days otherwise provided in the Class Notice for all Class Members whose notice is re-mailed. *Id*. at § 7.4.4.

C. Proposed Release

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

Release by Participating Class Members:

> All Participating Class Members, on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, release Released Parties from any and all claims asserted or that could have been asserted based on the facts pled in the Operative Complaint, including but not limited to, state wage and hour claims for any and all violations of California's Labor Code and Unfair Competition Law based on Defendant's failure to pay for all hours worked (including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages), failure to provide meal periods, failure to authorize and permit rest periods, failure to timely pay final wages at termination, failure to furnish accurate itemized wage statements, and failure to indemnify employees for expenditures based on the alleged Labor Code violations, and all damages, interest, penalties, attorneys' fees, costs, and other amounts recoverable under said causes of action under California law, to the extent permissible, including, but not limited to, the California Labor Code and the applicable Wage Orders. Except as set forth in Section 5.3 of this Agreement, Participating Class Members do not release any other claims, including claims for vested benefits, wrongful termination, violation of the Fair Employment and Housing Act, unemployment insurance, disability, social security, workers' compensation, or claims based on facts occurring outside the Class Period.

Settlement Agreement at § 5.2.

Release by Aggrieved Employees:

> All Aggrieved Employees are deemed to release, on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators,

successors, and assigns, the Released Parties from all claims for PAGA penalties that were alleged, or reasonably could have been alleged, based on the PAGA Period facts stated in the Operative Complaint and the PAGA Notice, including any and all claims involving any alleged failure to pay minimum wages or overtime, failure to provide meal and rest periods, failure to provide accurate wage statements, failure to pay all wages due at separation, and failure to reimburse business expenses, including Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 210, 216, 223, 225.5, 226, 226.3, 226.7, 245-248.5, 256, 432, 432.5, 432.7, 510, 512, 558, 558.1, 1024.5, 1174, 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 1198.5, 1199, 2699, 2699.3, 2802, 2810.5 during the PAGA Period. Aggrieved Employees only release these claims for the duration of the PAGA Period.

Settlement Agreement at § 5.3.

Only Plaintiff will agree to a general release and a waiver of Civil Code § 1542. Settlement Agreement at §§ 5.1, 5.1.1.

IV. THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT MEETS ALL CRITERIA FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL

A. Provisional Certification of the Class is Appropriate

Class certification is appropriate when there is: (1) an ascertainable and sufficiently numerous class; (2) a well-defined community of interest among class members; and (3) substantial benefits from certification that render proceeding as a class superior to the alternatives. *Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Superior Court*, 53 Cal.4th 1004, 1021 (2012). Although courts still need to review and consider each element for certification, a lesser standard can be used to provisionally certify a settlement class. *Global Minerals & Metals Corp. v. Superior Court*, 113 Cal.App.4th 836, 859 (2003).

1. The Proposed Class is Numerous and Ascertainable

"Ascertainability" is determined by examining the class definition and the size of the class and may also involve examining the means available to identify class members. *Noel v. Thrifty Payless, Inc.*, 7 Cal.5th 955, 980-981, 985-986 (2019). As the settlement eliminates the need for trial, "the case management issues inherent in the ascertainable class determination need not be confronted." *Global Minerals*, 113 Cal.App.4th at 859. Further, under California law, there is no minimum number of class members for maintenance of a class action. *Hendershot v. Ready to Roll Transp., Inc.*, 228 Cal.App.4th 1213, 1222 (2014). Class sizes as small as 10 have been permitted.

Rose v. City of Hayward, 126 Cal.App.3d 926, 934 (1981), disapproved on other grounds by *Noel*, 7 Cal.5th at 986.

The Class here consists of all persons employed by Defendant in California and classified as non-exempt, hourly-paid employees who worked for Defendant during the Class Period. *See* Settlement Agreement at §§ 1.5, 1.12. The Class is also readily ascertainable from Defendant's business records, because all Class Members are or were employees of Defendant. *Id*. Defendant's records show there are approximately 75 Class Members, making joinder of all Class Members impracticable. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 12.

2. A Well-Defined Community of Interest Exists

The community of interest requirement embodies three factors: (1) predominant common questions of law or fact; (2) class representatives with claims or defenses typical of the class; and (3) class representatives who can adequately represent the class. *Brinker*, 53 Cal.4th at 1021.

a. Common Questions Predominate

In determining whether common issues "predominate," courts consider both plaintiff's legal theories and defendant's affirmative defenses. *Duran v. U.S. Bank Nat'l Ass'n*, 59 Cal.4th 1, 28-29 (2014). The "predominate common questions" factor does not require that all class members have identical claims. *Ayala v. Antelope Valley Newspapers, Inc.*, 59 Cal.4th 522, 530 (2014). Rather, the focus is on whether issues shared by the class members are sufficiently uniform to permit class-wide assessment, and whether individual variations in proof on those issues are manageable. *Id.*

Plaintiff has alleged that Defendant maintained common employment policies and/or practices that unlawfully deprived Class Members of wages, meal periods, rest periods, reimbursements for business expenses, accurate wage statements, and timely payment of wages upon separation of employment. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 13. These allegations present common factual and legal questions of, *inter alia*, whether Defendant applied the same scheduling, timekeeping, pay, meal period, rest period, and reimbursement policies to all Class Members, whether these policies and practices resulted in Labor Code violations, whether Defendant's conduct was intentional, and whether Class Members are entitled to damages and/or penalties. *Id*. These

common questions could be resolved using Class Members' time records, payroll records, testimony from Defendant's designated representative(s), and Class Members' testimony. *Id*. Therefore, the Court can and should exercise its discretion to grant conditional class certification for settlement purposes.

b. *Plaintiff's Claims Are Typical of the Class*

Typicality does not require that the representative plaintiff's claims and those of the class members be identical or perfectly aligned. *Wershba v. Apple Computer, Inc.*, 91 Cal.App.4th 224, 228 (2001), disapproved on other grounds by *Hernandez v. Restoration Hardware, Inc.*, 4 Cal.5th 260 (2018). Typicality does not require that a plaintiff's claims be identical to those of other class members, only that their claims and the defenses applicable to them are sufficiently similar to those of other class members that a named plaintiff is able to adequately represent the class and focus on common issues. *Medrazo v. Honda of North Hollywood*, 166 Cal.App.4th 89, 99 (2008).

Plaintiff has alleged that Decedent and Class Members were employed by the same Defendant and injured by Defendant's common wage and hour policies and practices, including Defendant's scheduling, timekeeping, pay, meal period, rest period, and reimbursement policies. *See* Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 13. Through informal discovery, Plaintiff's Counsel confirmed that these challenged policies and practices applied to Decedent and Class Members alike. *See id.* at ¶ 11. Therefore, the claims Plaintiff asserts as Decedent's successor in interest and Class Members' claims arise from the same challenged employment policies and practices and are based on the same legal theories.

c. *Plaintiff and Plaintiff's Counsel Will Adequately Represent the Class*

Certification requires adequacy of both the proposed class representative and of the proposed class counsel. Cal. Code Civ. Proc. § 382. "Only a conflict that goes to the very subject matter of the litigation will defeat a party's claim of representative status." *Richmond v. Dart Industries*, 29 Cal.3d 462, 470 (1981). Only conflicts that are "irreconcilable" can defeat adequacy. *Nat'l Solar Equip. Owners' Ass'n v. Grumman Corp.*, 235 Cal.App.3d 1273, 1286 (1991). The proposed representative Plaintiff and proposed Class Counsel present no such conflict.

Plaintiff's interests are coextensive with Class Members' interests. Decedent demonstrated

an ability to advocate for the interests of Class Members by initiating this lawsuit, providing information to her attorneys, meeting with her attorneys regarding the claims, making herself available for mediation to answer questions, and reviewing the proposed terms of the settlement prior to passing away. Decedent passed away on March 29, 2025. Plaintiff, her daughter, was substituted into the action as Decedent's successor in interest and is authorized to act on behalf of all of Decedent's successors in interest. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 7.

Likewise, Wilshire Law Firm has expended considerable time and effort on this case and will continue to do so through final approval. *See generally*, Fattahi Decl. Therefore, Plaintiff should be appointed Class Representative, and her counsel should be appointed Class Counsel.

3. A Class Action is Superior to a Multitude of Individual Lawsuits

Courts have held that class treatment of wage and hour claims is clearly "superior to the other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy." *Dean Witter Reynolds, Inc. v. Superior Court*, 211 Cal.App.3d 758, 772-773 (1989). This is so because "[p]ublic policy has long favored the 'full and prompt payment of wages due an employee.'" *Sav-On Drug Stores, Inc. v. Superior Court*, 34 Cal.4th 319, 340 (2004). Here, a class action is superior to a multitude of individual lawsuits. Given the size and amount of each Class Member's claim, Class Members have little incentive to litigate their claims on an individual basis because the out-of-pocket expenses and personal commitment necessary to litigate each claim likely outweigh any potential recovery. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 12. Therefore, a class action is the superior method for seeking relief.

B. The Settlement Meets the Standards for Preliminary Approval

The moving party must demonstrate that "the settlement is fair, adequate and reasonable." *Kullar v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc.*, 168 Cal.App.4th 116, 126 (2008). "In determining whether a class settlement is fair, adequate, and reasonable, the trial court should consider relevant factors, such as the strength of plaintiffs' case, the risk, expense, complexity and likely duration of further litigation, the risk of maintaining class action status through trial, the amount offered in settlement, the extent of discovery completed and the stage of the proceedings, the experience and views of counsel, the presence of a governmental participant, and the reaction of the class members to the

proposed settlement." *Wershba*, 91 Cal.App.4th at 244-245 (internal quotations and citations omitted).

1. The Settlement is Entitled to a Presumption of Fairness

A settlement is entitled to "a presumption of fairness . . . where: (1) the settlement is reached through arm's length bargaining; (2) investigation and discovery are sufficient to allow counsel and the court to act intelligently; (3) counsel is experienced in similar litigation; and (4) the percentage of objectors is small." *Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.*, 48 Cal.App.4th 1794, 1801 (1996). The Settlement here satisfies the first three factors. Plaintiff will analyze the fourth factor at final approval after Class Members have been notified of the Settlement and provided with an opportunity to object.

a. The Settlement is the Result of Arm's Length Negotiation

Courts have recognized that the involvement of a respected mediator provides a high degree of assurance that the settlement is the result of arm's length bargaining. *See Chavez v. Netflix, Inc.*, 162 Cal.App.4th 43, 52-53 (2008). The Settlement in this matter was the product of a full-day mediation session with a respected mediator. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 6. The negotiations were adversarial, conducted at arm's length, and tempered by the efforts of both sides to serve the interests of their clients. *Id.*

b. Sufficient Investigation and Discovery Have Been Conducted

Prior to attending mediation, Plaintiff's Counsel thoroughly investigated the claims, applicable law, and potential defenses. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 11. Plaintiff's Counsel assessed the value of the class claims using the data and documents that Defendant produced in informal discovery, including class data providing the number of Class Members, the number of workweeks in the Class Period, and the number of pay periods in the PAGA Period, Decedent's personnel file and documents concerning Decedent, Defendant's employee handbooks, Defendant's written wage-and-hour policies, job descriptions, and a random sampling of time and payroll records. *Id.*

c. Plaintiff's Counsel is Experienced in Similar Litigation

Plaintiff is represented by Wilshire Law Firm, PLC. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 24. Plaintiff's Counsel has extensive experience litigating wage and hour class actions on behalf of employees.

See id. at ¶¶ 24-33. Plaintiff's Counsel has been involved as counsel in numerous class actions that have resulted in millions of dollars in recovery. *See id.*

2. The Settlement is Reasonable Given the Strengths of Plaintiff's Claims and the Risks and Expense of Further Litigation

A settlement does not have to provide 100% of the damages sought to be considered fair and reasonable. *See Rebney v. Wells Fargo Bank*, 220 Cal.App.3d 1117, 1139 (1991). Although the exposure Plaintiff's Counsel calculated is substantial, the various risks of succeeding at class certification and through trial affected the valuation of the claims for settlement purposes. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 14.

Minimum and Overtime Wages: Plaintiff's unpaid minimum and overtime wage claims were based on the allegation that Defendant required Class Members to perform work duties while off the clock, without compensation. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 15. For example, Plaintiff alleged that Defendant required Decedent and other Class Members to work off the clock, including by clocking out for meal periods but continuing to work approximately two to three times per week due to the high volume of work. Plaintiff further alleged that Decedent and other Class Members frequently noticed that their time sheets did not accurately reflect all of the hours they actually worked. *Id*. For purposes of calculating Defendant's liability based on a best-case scenario for Plaintiff and the Class, Plaintiff's Counsel assumed that all unpaid worktime should have been paid at the overtime rate of pay and conservatively estimated that Defendant is liable for one (1) hour of unpaid worktime per workweek. Defendant's records show that 42.3% of all shifts were over eight hours in length, such that off-the-clock work would likely have resulted in unpaid overtime. *Id*. This results in potential exposure for this claim of approximately $249,527.52 (8,544 workweeks x $19.47 average hourly rate of pay x 1 hour/workweek x 1.5 overtime rate). Because this claim would have relied heavily on Class Member testimony and would not be evidenced in Defendant's time and payroll records, the risk of succeeding at class certification and trial was substantial. Accordingly, Plaintiff's Counsel applied a risk discount based on a 40% chance of succeeding at class certification and a 40% chance of succeeding at trial on the merits, yielding a realistic damage estimate of approximately $39,924.40 ($249,527.52 x 40% x 40%). *Id*.

Meal Periods: Plaintiff's meal period claim was based on the allegation that Defendant failed to provide Class Members with legally compliant meal periods or pay meal period premiums in lieu thereof. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 16. For example, Plaintiff alleged that Defendant required Decedent and other Class Members to clock out for meal periods but continue working, approximately two to three times per week, due to the high volume of work. Plaintiff further alleged that meal periods were frequently short, interrupted, or late, and that employees who worked more than ten hours were not provided a second meal period. *Id*. Additionally, Plaintiff's Counsel's consultant determined there was a 52.5% meal period violation rate (for shifts over 6 hours that are not waivable) from the sampling of Defendant's time and payroll records, where meal periods were short, late, or missed. *Id*. Therefore, potential liability for the meal period claim is approximately $399,077.56 (39,042 shifts over 6 hours x $19.47 average hourly rate x 52.5% violation rate). *Id*. After taking into account the difficulty of certifying and proving meal period claims, as well as Defendant's contention that the claim lacks merit, Plaintiff's Counsel discounted this figure based on a 50% chance of succeeding at class certification and a 40% chance of succeeding at trial, yielding a realistic damage estimate of approximately $79,815.51 ($399,077.56 x 50% x 40%). *Id*.

Rest Periods: Plaintiff's rest period claim was based on the allegation that Defendant failed to provide Class Members with legally compliant rest periods or pay rest period premiums in lieu thereof. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 17. For example, Plaintiff alleged that Defendant required Decedent and other Class Members to work through their rest periods or have them interrupted, approximately two to three times per week, due to the high volume of work, and to remain on the work premises during rest periods, as required by Defendant's 2017 Employee Handbook. Plaintiff further alleged that employees were not provided a third rest period when they worked more than ten hours in a workday. *Id*. Based on Plaintiff's allegations and Decedent's and other Class Members' experience working for Defendant, Plaintiff's Counsel applied a 50% violation rate to all qualifying shifts during the Class Period. Therefore, Defendant's potential liability for the rest period claim is approximately $396,049.01 (40,683 shifts of 3.5 hours or longer x $19.47 average hourly rate x 50% violation rate). However, Plaintiff's Counsel discounted this figure to account for the

difficulty of certifying and proving rest period claims, particularly because rest periods do not have to be recorded, and to account for the possibility of Class Members voluntarily choosing to forego a rest period. *Id*. Because this claim would have relied primarily on Class Member testimony, Plaintiff's Counsel discounted this claim based on a 40% chance of succeeding at class certification and a 40% chance of succeeding at trial, yielding a realistic damage estimate of approximately $63,367.84 ($396,049.01 x 40% x 40%). *Id*.

Reimbursements: Plaintiff's reimbursement claim was based on the allegation that Defendant failed to indemnify Class Members for expenses incurred as a direct result of performing their job duties for Defendant, such as mandatory use of personal cell phones for work purposes (including communicating with supervisors and managers) and the purchase of tweezers needed to sift through rice to remove broken or damaged grains. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 18. For purposes of calculating Defendant's liability based on a best-case scenario for Plaintiff and the Class, Plaintiff's Counsel estimated that Defendant was liable to each Class Member for $6.25 per workweek in unreimbursed expenses, for a total amount of approximately $53,400.00 ($6.25 x 8,544 workweeks). *Id*. However, Defendant argued that these expenses were not required by Defendant, and that it could not have known that these expenses were being incurred. *Id*. Accordingly, Plaintiff's Counsel discounted this claim based on a 40% chance of succeeding at class certification and a 30% chance of succeeding at trial, yielding a realistic damage estimate of approximately $6,408.00 ($53,400.00 x 40% x 30%). *Id*.

In sum, Plaintiff's Counsel estimated that Plaintiff's maximum recovery for the off-the-clock claim, meal period violations, rest period violations, and failure to reimburse expenses (i.e., the wage claims) is approximately $1,098,054.09. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 19. However, after factoring in the risk and uncertainty of prevailing at certification and trial, Plaintiff's Counsel estimates that Plaintiff's realistic estimated recovery for these non-penalty wage claims is approximately $189,515.75. *Id*.

Derivative Penalties: Plaintiff alleged that as a result of Defendant's failure to pay all wages owed, Defendant owed waiting time penalties and wage statement penalties. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 20. With respect to Plaintiff's derivative claims for statutory penalties, Plaintiff's Counsel estimated

that Defendant's maximum potential liability is approximately $414,312.80. *Id*. Defendant's maximum potential liability for waiting time penalties is approximately $238,312.80 (51 employees x $19.47 average hourly rate of pay x 8 hours/day x 30 days) based on approximately 51 formerly employed Class Members during the 3-year statute of limitations period and an average shift length of 8 hours. *Id*. Defendant's maximum potential liability for inaccurate wage statements is approximately $176,000.00 (44 employees x $4,000.00 statutory maximum) based on approximately 44 Class Members who worked during the 1-year statute of limitations period and approximately 1,956 pay periods in that statutory timeframe. *Id*. In light of the foregoing, Plaintiff's Counsel believes that it would be unrealistic to expect the Court to award the full $414,312.80 in statutory penalties given Defendant's defenses, the contested nature of Plaintiff's claims, the challenges of establishing willfulness as applicable, and the discretionary nature of penalties. *Id*. Considering that the underlying wage claims are realistically estimated to be approximately $189,515.75, such a disproportionate award would also raise due process concerns. *Id*. As such, Plaintiff's Counsel discounted these figures to account for the risk and uncertainty of obtaining class certification and prevailing at trial, resulting in a realistic evaluation of approximately $28,597.54 for waiting time penalty claims ($238,312.80 x 40% x 30%), and approximately $21,120.00 for wage statement penalty claims ($176,000.00 x 40% x 30%), or approximately $49,717.54 total for statutory penalties. *Id.*

PAGA: For the PAGA claim, Plaintiff's Counsel determined that Defendant's potential exposure could reach $192,500.00, assuming the initial $100 penalty would apply for each of the 1,925 pay periods in the PAGA Period. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 21. However, even assuming success on the merits of each claim, PAGA gives the Court discretion to reduce penalties for a variety of reasons, including where to do otherwise would result in an award that is unjust, arbitrary and oppressive, or confiscatory. *Id*. As such, Plaintiff's Counsel discounted this figure to account for the risk and uncertainty of prevailing at trial, resulting in a realistic evaluation of approximately $19,250.00 for PAGA penalties ($192,500.00 x 10%). *Id*. The settlement allocates $10,000.00 of the Gross Settlement Amount to PAGA; therefore, the PAGA allocation amounts to 4.3% of the Gross Settlement Amount and approximately 52% of the realistic estimate for PAGA penalties

($10,000.00 / $19,250.00). *Id.*

Using these estimated figures, Plaintiff's Counsel predicted that the realistic maximum recovery for all claims, including penalties, would be approximately $258,483.29. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 22. This means that the gross settlement amount represents approximately 91% of the realistic maximum recovery ($235,000.00 / $258,483.29). *Id*. Considering the risk and uncertainty of prevailing at class certification and at trial, this is an excellent result for the Class. *Id*. Indeed, because of the proposed Settlement, Class Members will receive timely, guaranteed relief and will avoid the risk of an unfavorable judgment. *Id*.

Based on the figures in the Settlement Agreement, the Net Settlement Amount available for class settlement payments is currently estimated to be $109,166.67 for approximately 75 Class Members. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 23. As a result, each Settlement Class Member would be eligible to receive an average net benefit of approximately $1,455.56. *Id*. Based on the estimated Net Settlement Amount available for individual class payments and there being approximately 8,544 workweeks in the Class Period, the estimated weekly valuation for Individual Class Payments is $12.78 ($109,166.67 / 8,544 workweeks). *Id*.

C. The Requested Service Payment is Reasonable

Plaintiff seeks a Class Representative Service Payment of up to $7,500.00 for accepting the responsibilities of representing the interests of the Class and potential costs that were not borne by any other Class Member. Settlement Agreement at § 3.2.1. A named plaintiff is eligible for payment that reasonably compensates the plaintiff for undertaking and fulfilling a fiduciary duty to represent absent class members. *See Cellphone Termination Fee Cases*, 186 Cal.App.4th 1380, 1393 (2010); *Bell v. Farmers Ins. Exch.*, 115 Cal.App.4th 715, 726 (2004).

Before her passing, Decedent assisted counsel in providing information necessary to prosecute the claims, meeting with counsel regarding the claims, maintaining regular contact with counsel, making herself available the day of mediation to answer questions, and reviewing the Settlement to ensure it was fair to the Class. Decedent also sat for a remote deposition on June 25, 2024. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 5. No action would likely have been taken by Class Members individually and no compensation would have been recovered for them, but for Decedent's services on behalf

of the Class. By actively pursuing this action, Decedent and Plaintiff furthered the California public policy goal of enforcing the State's wage-and-hour laws. *See Sav-On*, 34 Cal.4th at 340. The requested Class Representative Service Payment is reasonable and should be preliminarily approved. Plaintiff's Counsel will provide additional information regarding Decedent's and Plaintiff's work as requested or required by the Court at final approval.

D. The Requested Attorneys' Fees and Costs Are Reasonable

The purpose of an attorneys' fee award in class action litigation is to reward counsel who invested in a case despite the risk of non-payment and achieved a substantial positive result for the class. California courts routinely award attorneys' fees equaling one-third or more of the potential value of the common fund. *See Chavez*, 162 Cal.App.4th at 66, fn. 11 ("Empirical studies show that, regardless of whether the percentage method or the lodestar method is used, fee awards in class actions average around one-third of the recovery.").

Plaintiff seeks appointment of Wilshire Law Firm, PLC as Class Counsel. The attorneys performed significant work and expended litigation costs in prosecuting this matter with no guarantee of payment. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 24. Plaintiff's Counsel seeks preliminary approval for up to 33 and 1/3% of the Gross Settlement Amount in attorneys' fees, currently estimated to be $78,333.33, and up to $25,000.00 in reimbursement of litigation costs. Given the work performed in this matter, the extensive information exchange, and the substantial recovery obtained on behalf of the Class, Plaintiff's Counsel achieved a settlement through efficient and diligent work. *See generally*, Fattahi Decl. At final approval, Plaintiff's Counsel will fully brief the merits of its request for the award of attorneys' fees and litigation costs.

E. The Administration Costs Are Reasonable

The Parties have agreed upon using Apex to administer this Settlement. Settlement Agreement at §§ 1.2, 7.1. Plaintiff seeks preliminary approval of $5,000.00 for Apex to administer this Settlement pursuant to Apex's will-not-exceed bid. *See* Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 36, Exhibit 4. The services covered by this payment are extensive and necessary to carry out the Settlement administration.

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F. The PAGA Settlement Is Fair, Reasonable, and Adequate

PAGA allows an aggrieved employee to recover civil penalties for Labor Code violations on behalf of the State of California and other aggrieved employees. Labor Code § 2699; *Iskanian v. CLS Transportation Los Angeles, LLC*, 59 Cal.4th 348 (2014); *Williams v. Superior Court*, 3 Cal.5th 531 (2017). Because a PAGA action is brought on behalf of the State, the Court must review and approve any PAGA settlement, and the proposed settlement must be submitted to the LWDA at the same time it is submitted to the Court. Labor Code § 2699. The Court determines whether the PAGA settlement is fair, reasonable, and adequate in view of PAGA's purposes of remediating existing violations, deterring future violations, and maximizing enforcement of the State's labor laws. *Moniz v. Adecco USA, Inc.*, 72 Cal.App.5th 56 (2021).

Plaintiff has satisfied PAGA's procedural requirements. Decedent gave written notice of the alleged Labor Code violations to the LWDA and Defendant on January 13, 2023; the LWDA did not notify Decedent that it intended to investigate; and the PAGA claim was then filed on May 8, 2023. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 4, Exhibit 1. Decedent's PAGA claim is alleged in the PAGA Action, which is also pending in this Court, and Plaintiff will add it to this action through the Operative Complaint. *Id.* at ¶ 9. Plaintiff submitted the Settlement Agreement to the LWDA at the same time it was submitted to the Court. *Id.* at ¶ 10, Exhibit 3. Plaintiff will promptly advise the Court of any response from the LWDA.

The Settlement allocates $10,000.00 of the Gross Settlement Amount to PAGA penalties. Seventy-five percent ($7,500.00) will be paid to the LWDA, and twenty-five percent ($2,500.00) will be distributed to the Aggrieved Employees according to the number of pay periods each worked during the PAGA Period. Settlement Agreement at §§ 3.2.5, 3.2.5.1. Based on approximately 44 Aggrieved Employees and 1,925 PAGA Period pay periods, each pay period is valued at approximately $1.30, and the average Individual PAGA Payment is approximately $56.82. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 21.

Aggrieved Employees cannot opt out of the PAGA portion of the Settlement and will receive their Individual PAGA Payments even if they exclude themselves from the class settlement. *See* Settlement Agreement, Exhibit A (Class Notice). In return, Aggrieved Employees

release only PAGA penalty claims that were, or reasonably could have been, alleged based on the PAGA Period facts stated in the Operative Complaint and the PAGA Notice, and only for the PAGA Period. Settlement Agreement at § 5.3. Aggrieved Employees who exclude themselves from the class settlement keep their individual wage-and-hour claims. *See* Settlement Agreement, Exhibit A (Class Notice).

The PAGA allocation is fair, reasonable, and adequate in light of the risks of litigating the PAGA claim. Plaintiff's Counsel calculated maximum PAGA exposure of $192,500.00, assuming the initial $100 penalty for each of the 1,925 pay periods in the PAGA Period, but the Court has discretion to reduce PAGA penalties that would be unjust, arbitrary and oppressive, or confiscatory, and Plaintiff's Counsel estimated a realistic PAGA recovery of $19,250.00. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 21. The $10,000.00 allocation is approximately 52% of that realistic estimate and approximately 5.2% of the maximum exposure. *Id.* The PAGA claim also depends on the same underlying wage claims that carried substantial risk at class certification and trial, *see* Section IV.B.2, above, so the penalty claim shared those risks. The Settlement provides certain, prompt payment to the LWDA and to every Aggrieved Employee, avoids the cost and delay of trial, and was reached through arm's-length negotiation with the assistance of an experienced mediator. Fattahi Decl. at ¶ 6. The PAGA settlement serves PAGA's purposes and should be approved.

V. CONCLUSION

The Parties have negotiated a fair and reasonable settlement of the class claims in light of the risks presented in this case. Plaintiff has presented the materials and information necessary to demonstrate that the requirements for preliminary approval have been met, and therefore respectfully requests that the Court preliminarily approve the Settlement and the PAGA settlement and schedule a date for the final approval hearing.

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Respectfully submitted,

Dated: October 29, 2026

WILSHIRE LAW FIRM, PLC

By: 

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