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12 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
13 **COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**

14 PABLO ACOSTA, COLLEEN
15 DUARTE, CALVIN SMITH, SLEEM
16 SHEIKH, and CHIA-CHEN CHANG,
17 individuals, on behalf of themselves,
18 and on behalf of all persons similarly
19 situated,

20 Plaintiff,

21 vs.

22 AXLEHIRE, INC., a Corporation; and
23 DOES 1 through 50, inclusive,

24 Defendants.

CASE NO.: **23CV057116**

[consolidated with Case No. 23CV055896]

**[PROPOSED] PRELIMINARY
APPROVAL ORDER**

Hearing Date: August 5, 2025 _____

Hearing Time: 2:30 p.m.

Judge: Hon. Somnath Raj Chatterjee

Dept: 21

Date Filed: December 1, 2023

Trial Date: Not set

25 This matter came before the Honorable Somnath Raj Chatterjee of the Superior Court of
26 the State of California, in and for the County Alameda, on August 5, 2025, for hearing on the
27 unopposed motion by Plaintiffs Pablo Acosta, Colleen Duarte, Calvin Smith, Sleem Sheikh, and
28 Chia-Chen Chang (“Plaintiffs”) for preliminary approval of the Settlement with Defendant Jitsu,

PRELIMINARY APPROVAL ORDER

1 Inc. (formerly known as Axlehire, Inc.) (“Defendant”). The Court, having considered the briefs,
2 argument of counsel and all matters presented to the Court and good cause appearing, hereby
3 GRANTS Plaintiffs’ Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action Settlement.
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5 **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:**

6 1. The Court preliminarily approves the Class Action and PAGA Settlement
7 Agreement (“Agreement”) attached as Exhibit #1 to the Declaration of Kyle Nordrehaug in
8 Support of Plaintiffs’ Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action Settlement. This is based
9 on the Court’s determination that the Settlement set forth in the Agreement is within the range of
10 possible final approval, pursuant to the provisions of Section 382 of the California Code of Civil
11 Procedure and California Rules of Court, rule 3.769.

12 2. This Order incorporates by reference the definitions in the Agreement, and all
13 terms defined therein shall have the same meaning in this Order as set forth in the Agreement.

14 3. The Gross Settlement Amount that Defendant shall pay is Two Million Four
15 Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$2,400,000). It appears to the Court on a preliminary basis that the
16 settlement amount and terms are fair, adequate and reasonable as to all potential Class Members
17 when balanced against the probable outcome of further litigation and the significant risks relating
18 to certification, liability and damages issues. It further appears that investigation and research
19 have been conducted such that counsel for the Parties are able to reasonably evaluate their
20 respective positions. It further appears to the Court that the Settlement will avoid substantial
21 additional costs by all Parties, as well as avoid the delay and risks that would be presented by the
22 further prosecution of the Action. It further appears that the Settlement has been reached as the
23 result of serious and non-collusive, arm’s-length negotiations.

24 4. The Court preliminarily finds that the Settlement appears to be within the range of
25 reasonableness of a settlement that could ultimately be given final approval by this Court. The
26 Court has reviewed the monetary recovery that is being granted as part of the Settlement and
27 preliminarily finds that the monetary settlement made available to the Class is fair, adequate, and
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1 reasonable when balanced against the probable outcome of further litigation and the significant
2 risks relating to certification, liability, and damages issues.

3 5. The Agreement specifies for an attorneys' fees award not to exceed one-third of the
4 Gross Settlement Amount, an award of litigation expenses incurred, not to exceed \$20,000, and
5 proposed Class Representative Service Payments to the Plaintiffs in an amount not to exceed
6 \$15,000 each. The Court will not approve the amount of attorneys' fees and costs, nor the amount
7 of any service award, until the Final Approval Hearing. Plaintiffs will be required to present
8 evidence supporting these requests, including lodestar, prior to final approval.

9 6. The Court recognizes that Plaintiffs and Defendant stipulate and agree to
10 representative treatment and certification of a class for settlement purposes only. For settlement
11 purposes only, the Court conditionally certifies the Class which consists of "all individuals who
12 are or previously contracted with Defendant as couriers in the State of California at any time
13 during the Class Period." The "Class Period" is December 1, 2019 through March 17, 2025.

14 7. The Court concludes that, for settlement purposes only, the Class meets the
15 requirements for certification under section 382 of the California Code of Civil Procedure in that:
16 (a) the Class is ascertainable and so numerous that joinder of all members of the Class is
17 impracticable; (b) common questions of law and fact predominate, and there is a well-defined
18 community of interest amongst the members of the Class with respect to the subject matter of the
19 litigation; (c) the claims of the Plaintiffs are typical of the claims of the members of the Class; (d)
20 the Plaintiffs will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the members of the Class; (e) a
21 class action is superior to other available methods for the efficient adjudication of this controversy;
22 and (f) counsel for the Class is qualified to act as counsel for the Class and the Plaintiffs are
23 adequate representatives of the Class.

24 8. The Court provisionally appoints Plaintiffs as the representatives of the Class. The
25 Court provisionally appoints Norman B. Blumenthal, Kyle R. Nordrehaug, and Aparajit Bhowmik
26 of Blumenthal Nordrehaug Bhowmik De Blouw LLP as Class Counsel for the Class.

1 9. The Agreement provides for a PAGA Penalties out of the Gross Settlement
2 Amount of \$100,000, which shall be allocated \$75,000 to the Labor & Workforce Development
3 Agency (“LWDA”) as the LWDA’s 75% share of the settlement of civil penalties paid under this
4 Agreement pursuant to the PAGA and \$25,000 to the Aggrieved Employees. “Aggrieved
5 Employees” are all individuals who are or previously contracted with Defendant as couriers in the
6 State of California at any time during the PAGA Period (March 24, 2022 through March 17,
7 2025). Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699, the LWDA was provided notice of the Agreement
8 and these settlement terms. The Court preliminarily finds the PAGA Penalties to be reasonable.

9 10. The Court hereby approves, as to form and content, the Class Notice attached to the
10 Agreement as Exhibit A. The Court finds that the Class Notice appears to fully and accurately
11 inform the Class of all material elements of the proposed Settlement, of the Class Members’ right
12 to be excluded from the Class by submitting a written opt-out request, and of each member’s right
13 and opportunity to object to the Settlement. The Court further finds that the distribution of the
14 Class Notice substantially in the manner and form set forth in the Agreement and this Order meets
15 the requirements of due process, is the best notice practicable under the circumstances, and shall
16 constitute due and sufficient notice to all persons entitled thereto. The Court orders the mailing of
17 the Class Notice by first class mail pursuant to the terms set forth in the Agreement. If a Class
18 Notice Packet is returned because of an incorrect address, the Administrator will promptly search
19 for a more current address for the Class Member and re-mail the Class Notice Packet to any new
20 address for the Class Member no later than seven (7) days after the receipt of the undelivered
21 Class Notice.

22 11. The Court hereby appoints Apex Class Action, LLC as the Administrator. No later
23 than thirty (30) days after this Order, Defendant will provide the Class Data to the Administrator.
24 The Administrator will perform address updates and verifications as necessary prior to the first
25 mailing. Using best efforts to mail it as soon as possible, and in no event later than fourteen (14)
26 days after receiving the Class Data, the Administrator will mail the Class Notice Packet to all
27 Class Members via first-class regular U.S. Mail to their last known address.

1 12. The Court hereby preliminarily approves the proposed procedure for exclusion
2 from the Settlement. Any Class Member may individually choose to opt out of and be excluded
3 from the Class as provided in the Class Notice by following the instructions for requesting
4 exclusion from the Class that are set forth in the Class Notice. All requests for exclusion must be
5 postmarked or received no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the date of the mailing of the
6 Class Notice (“Response Deadline”). If a Class Notice Packet is re-mailed, the Response Deadline
7 for requests for exclusion will be extended an additional fourteen (14) days. A Request for
8 Exclusion may also be faxed or emailed to the Administrator as indicated in the Class Notice.
9 Any such person who chooses to opt out of and be excluded from the Class will not be entitled to
10 any recovery under the Class Settlement and will not be bound by the Class Settlement or have
11 any right to object, appeal or comment thereon. Class Members who have not requested exclusion
12 shall be bound by all determinations of the Court, the Agreement and the Judgment. A request for
13 exclusion may only opt out that particular individual, and any attempt to effect an opt-out of a
14 group, class, or subclass of individuals is not permitted and will be deemed invalid.

15 13. Any Class Member who has not opted out may appear at the final approval hearing
16 and may object or express the Member’s views regarding the Settlement and may present evidence
17 and file briefs or other papers that may be proper and relevant to the issues to be heard and
18 determined by the Court as provided in the Class Notice. Class Members will have until the
19 Response Deadline to submit their written objections to the Administrator. Written objections
20 may also be faxed or emailed to the Administrator as indicated in the Class Notice. If a Class
21 Notice Packet is re-mailed, the Response Deadline for written objections will be extended an
22 additional fourteen (14) days. Alternatively, Class Members may appear at the Final Approval
23 Hearing to make an oral objection.

24 14. A final approval hearing shall be held before this Court on December 16, 2025 at
25 2:30 p.m. in Department 21 of the Alameda County Superior Court to hear the motion for final
26 approval and for attorneys’ fees and costs, and to determine all necessary matters concerning the
27 Settlement, including: whether the proposed settlement of the Action on the terms and conditions
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1 provided for in the Agreement is fair, adequate and reasonable and should be finally approved by
2 the Court; whether the Final Approval Order and Judgment should be entered herein; whether the
3 plan of allocation contained in the Agreement should be approved as fair, adequate and reasonable
4 to the Class Members; and to finally approve attorneys' fees and costs, service awards, and the
5 fees and expenses of the Administrator. All papers in support of the motion for final approval and
6 for attorneys' fees, costs and service award shall be filed with the Court and served on all counsel
7 no later than sixteen (16) court days before the hearing and both motions shall be heard at this
8 final approval hearing.

9 15. Neither the Settlement nor any resulting judgment, exhibit, document, or
10 instrument delivered thereunder shall be construed as a concession or admission by Defendant in
11 any way that the claims asserted have any merit or that this Action was properly brought as a class
12 or representative action, and shall not be used as evidence of, or used against Defendant as, an
13 admission or indication in any way, including with respect to any claim of any liability,
14 wrongdoing, fault or omission by Defendant or with respect to the truth of any allegation asserted
15 by any person or defenses by Defendant. Whether or not the Settlement is finally approved,
16 neither the Settlement, nor any resulting judgment, exhibit, document, statement, proceeding or
17 conduct related to the Settlement, nor any reports or accounts thereof, shall in any event be
18 construed as, offered or admitted in evidence as, received as or deemed to be evidence for any
19 purpose adverse to the Defendant, including, but not limited to, evidence of a presumption,
20 concession, indication or admission by Defendant of any liability, fault, wrongdoing, omission,
21 concession or damage.

22 16. In the event the Settlement does not become effective in accordance with the terms
23 of the Agreement, or the Settlement is not finally approved, or is terminated, canceled or fails to
24 become effective for any reason, this Order shall be rendered null and void and shall be vacated,
25 and the Parties shall revert to their respective positions as of before entering into the Agreement,
26 and expressly reserve their respective rights regarding the prosecution and defense of this Action,
27 including all available defenses and affirmative defenses, and arguments that any claim in the
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1 Action could not proceed in this Court, could not be certified as a class action and/or managed as a
2 representative action . In such an event, the Court's orders regarding the Settlement, including this
3 Order, shall not be used or referred to in litigation for any purpose. Nothing in this paragraph is
4 intended to alter the terms of the Agreement with respect to the effect of the Agreement if it is not
5 approved.

6 17. The Court reserves the right to adjourn or continue the date of the final approval
7 hearing and all dates provided for in the Agreement without further notice to Class Members and
8 retains jurisdiction to consider all further applications arising out of or connected with the
9 proposed Settlement.

10 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

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12 Dated: _____

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14 HON. SOMNATH RAI CHATTERJEE
15 JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
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