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April 7, 2026

Via Online Filing	**Via Certified Mail**
http://www.dir.ca.gov/Private-Attorneys-General-Act/Private-Attorneys-General-Act.html	DWWVF Inc. dba Villa Ford of Orange 2550 North Tustin Street Orange, CA 92865

Subject: *Kakou Ahulau v. DWWVF Inc. dba Villa Ford of Orange*

Dear Representative:

This office represents Kakou Keikikane- Mikalele Ahulau ("Plaintiff") in connection with Labor Code violation claims related to their employment with DWWVF Inc. dba Villa Ford of Orange ("Employer"). Employer can be contacted at:

DWWVF Inc. dba Villa Ford of Orange
2550 North Tustin Street
Orange, CA 92865

Plaintiff has personally suffered each of the Labor Code violations alleged in this letter while employed by Employer within the applicable one-year statute of limitations period. As such, Plaintiff intends to seek PAGA penalties on behalf of himself and all other non-exempt employees of Employer employed in California and who were subjected to any or all of the Labor Code violations referenced herein during the PAGA Period (together with Plaintiff, "Aggrieved Employees"). The PAGA Period begins one year prior to the date of this letter and, because the violations alleged herein are ongoing, the PAGA Period extends beyond the date of this letter.

In response to Labor Code violations alleged below, PAGA provides Employer with specific options to mitigate potential penalties:

Taking All Reasonable Steps to Be in Compliance:

Employer can reduce potential penalties to 15% of the maximum by demonstrating it has already taken all reasonable steps to be in compliance with all Labor Code provisions identified in this notice prior to receiving it. If Employer believes it has already taken all reasonable steps to be in compliance with all Labor Code provisions identified in this notice, Employer is encouraged to contact our office to set forth all reasonable steps taken.

If all reasonable steps are taken to be in compliance with all Labor Code provisions identified in this notice within 60 days after receiving it, penalties may be reduced to 30% of the maximum. If Employer intends to take all reasonable steps to be in compliance with all Labor Code provisions identified in this notice, Employer is encouraged to engage in good faith meet-and-confer discussions with our office regarding the alleged violations. Failure to do so may support a finding that all reasonable steps were not taken to comply with the Labor Code provisions identified herein.

Curing Violations:

For certain violations, Employer has the opportunity to fully cure the alleged violations to further reduce penalties or even avoid penalties altogether. Once again, we strongly encourage Employer to promptly initiate meet-and-confer discussions with our office as part of any compliance or cure efforts. Failure to do so may result in a cure that is insufficient.

Employer must notify both our office and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) of any steps taken towards compliance or any attempts to cure. Not only does this approach demonstrate a good faith attempt to come into compliance, but failure to do so could potentially support a finding that Employer's conduct was malicious, fraudulent, or oppressive, thereby leading to increased penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699(f)(2)(B).

All communications regarding this matter should be directed to:

Frontier Law Center
6200 Canoga Ave, Suite 470
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

This letter is sent pursuant to the requirements of Labor Code section 2699.3. The Labor Code violations being alleged are as follows:

Minimum Wage Violations

Labor Code section 1197 and the applicable Wage Order requires an employer to pay an employee no less than the minimum wage for all hours worked.

Employer failed to pay the Aggrieved Employees the minimum wage for all hours worked because the Aggrieved Employees were required to perform work while off the clock. Specifically, managers directed the Aggrieved Employees to clock out for lunch, then instructed them to return to cover duties before the meal break was complete.

Civil Penalties Applicable to Minimum Wage Violations

As a result of the above minimum wage violations, Employer is subject to the civil penalties listed in Labor Code sections 1197.1 and 2699.

Overtime Violations

Labor Code section 510 and the applicable Wage Order provides that an employee shall be paid one and one-half times their regular rate of pay for any work in excess of eight hours in one workday or 40 hours in any one workweek. Labor Code section 510 and the applicable Wage Order further provides that an employee shall be paid twice their regular rate of pay for any work in excess of 12 hours in one day.

Unpaid Overtime Due to Off the Clock Work

The Aggrieved Employees regularly worked in excess of eight hours in a day and 40 hours in a workweek. Since the Aggrieved Employees were required to perform work off the clock, it follows that this time was often overtime. The Aggrieved Employees worked extensive hours, including weeks of 120-140 hours, demonstrating that substantial work occurred beyond recorded hours. Thus, the Aggrieved Employees were not paid all overtime wages owed.

Overtime Paid at the Wrong Regular Rate

Overtime must be paid based on an employee's regular rate of pay. Here, Employer failed to incorporate all remunerations, including commissions and monthly gross-performance bonuses, into the calculation of the regular rate of pay for purposes of calculating the Aggrieved Employees' overtime rates. This resulted in the underpayment of overtime to the Aggrieved Employees.

Civil Penalties Applicable to Overtime Violations

As a result of the above overtime violations, Employer is subject to the civil penalties listed in Labor Code sections 558, 1197.1, and 2699.

Meal Break Violations

Labor Code section 512 and the applicable Wage Order provides that an employer shall not employ an employee for a work period of more than five hours per day without providing the employee with a meal period of not less than 30 minutes, or more than 10 hours per day without providing the employee with a second meal period of not less than 30 minutes. Meal periods must be uninterrupted, and the employee must be relieved of all duty.

Labor Code section 226.7 further provides that an employee is entitled to one hour of pay at their regular rate of pay for each day that a compliant meal period was not provided.

Missed or Short Meal Breaks

The Aggrieved Employees' meal breaks were regularly missed, shortened, or interrupted almost every shift. Specifically, Aggrieved Employees were instructed by managers to clock back in from lunch breaks early to provide coverage, resulting in shortened meal periods throughout their employment. Additionally, Aggrieved Employees were called during their meal breaks to assist customers, requiring them to leave the upstairs lunchroom and return to the sales floor to help with customer needs. These practices resulted in systematic denial of compliant meal breaks and demonstrate that Employer, through its management, was aware of and affirmatively directed these violations.

On Call / On Duty Meal Breaks

An employer provides compliant meal breaks to its employees "if it relieves its employees of all duty, relinquishes control over their activities and permits them a reasonable opportunity to take an uninterrupted 30-minute break." (*Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Superior Court*, 53 Cal.4th 1004, 1040 (2012)).

Here, the Aggrieved Employees were required to remain on call and were not relieved of all duty during their meal breaks, as they were interrupted to assist with customer needs and were directed to return from lunch breaks before completion.

Premium Pay Not Paid

Premium pay for missed meal breaks must be paid at the employees' regular rate of pay. (*Ferra v. Loews Hollywood Hotel, LLC*, 11 Cal. 5th 858 (2021)). The regular rate of pay includes all remunerations, including shift differentials, incentive pay, and other non-discretionary bonuses. Here, the Aggrieved Employees did not receive premium pay for missed meal breaks.

Civil Penalties Applicable to Meal Break Violations

As a result of the above meal break violations, Employer is subject to the civil penalties listed in Labor Code sections 558 and 2699.

Wage Statement Violations

Labor Code section 226 requires an employer to provide wage statements to its employees which include, among other things, gross and net wages earned, total hours worked, and all deductions. Employer failed to provide wage statements which accurately reflected this information.

Civil Penalties Applicable to Wage Statement Violations

As a result of the wage statement violations detailed above, Employer is subject to the civil penalties listed in Labor Code sections 226.3 and 2699.

Reservation of Rights

The facts and claims contained herein are based on the information available at the time of this writing. Therefore, if through discovery and/or expert review, Plaintiff becomes aware of additional facts or theories of liability, they expressly reserve the right to revise these facts and/or add any new claims by amending and/or supplementing this letter or by adding applicable causes of action to the complaint which will relate back to the date of this letter.

Sincerely,

/s/

Mike Rachmann