

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA,
COUNTY OF ORANGE
CIVIL COMPLEX CENTER**

MINUTE ORDER

DATE: 03/05/2026 TIME: 02:00:00 PM DEPT: CX102

JUDICIAL OFFICER PRESIDING: Layne H. Melzer

CLERK: L. Mendez

REPORTER/ERM: None

BAILIFF/COURT ATTENDANT: A. Condaras

CASE NO: **30-2024-01371468-CU-OE-CXC** CASE INIT.DATE: 01/08/2024

CASE TITLE: **Mora vs. Sterling Plumbing, Inc.**

CASE CATEGORY: Civil - Unlimited CASE TYPE: Other employment

EVENT ID/DOCUMENT ID: 74652631

EVENT TYPE: Motion for Final Approval

MOVING PARTY: Francisco Arroyo Mora

CAUSAL DOCUMENT/DATE FILED: Motion - Other For Final Approval of Class Action Settlement,
02/09/2026

APPEARANCES

No Appearance by all parties

Tentative Ruling posted on the Internet.

The Tentative Ruling was accepted and no appearance was requested.

The Court confirms the tentative ruling, a copy of which is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

Mora vs. Sterling Plumbing, Inc.
30-2024-1371468

Motion for Final Approval Class and PAGA Settlement

Plaintiff Francisco Arroyo Mora's Motion for Final Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**, pending the resolution of the issues identified below.

This is a putative wage-and-hour class action and PAGA matter.

On 1/8/2024, Plaintiff Francisco Arroyo Mora, on behalf of himself and all others similarly situated and on behalf of the general public, filed a complaint against Defendant Sterling Plumbing, Inc. (ROA #2.) The operative complaint is the first amended complaint, alleging various Labor Code wage-and-hour violations and unfair business practices, including a claim for PAGA penalties. (ROA #72.)

On 3/18/2025, Plaintiff filed the Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action Settlement. On 9/4/2025, at the 2nd hearing on the matter, the Court granted the motion. (ROA #92.) On 9/16/2025, the Court entered the order granting the motion. (ROA #101.)

On 2/9/2026, Plaintiff filed the instant Motion for Final Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement. The motion seeks approval of the Joint Stipulation and Settlement Agreement ("Settlement Agreement"), which provides for the settlement of Plaintiff's class and PAGA claims for the non-reversionary gross settlement amount ("GSA") of \$239,300. The GSA includes \$50,000 allocated for PAGA penalties.

The Class is comprised of 180 Class Members, defined as "all hourly, non-exempt employees of Defendant who worked in California at any time from November 4, 2022, to October 28, 2024." The Class Period is 11/4/2022 to 10/28/2024.

The settlement also includes 180 Aggrieved Employees, defined as "Class Members who worked during the PAGA Period." The PAGA Period is 11/4/2022 to 10/28/2024.

The settlement administrator, Apex Class Action, LLC, reports as follows:

- On 9/29/2025, the administrator sent class notices via U.S. Mail to 180 Class Members and Aggrieved Employees.
- As of 2/4/2026:
 - Thirteen (13) class notices were initially returned to the administrator as undeliverable. After skip-tracing, eight (8) updated addresses were obtained, and those notices were remailed, while five (5) notices remained undeliverable.
 - No requests for exclusion, objections, or workweek disputes were received.

Therefore, 100% of the Class is participating in the settlement.

The Court concludes that the \$239,300 settlement is fair, adequate, and reasonable, and in the best interests of the Class Members. The Court also concludes that the notice to the Class was adequate. The Court also certifies the defined Class for settlement purposes only.

The Court concludes that an attorneys' fee award totaling \$79,766.66 or 33% of the GSA, constituting a 0.70 multiplier against the lodestar amount, is fair, adequate, and reasonable for a class and settlement of this size, including considering the action's contingent nature and the results achieved.

The Court also concludes that litigation costs of \$14,966.84 as requested is fair, adequate, and reasonable.

The Court further concludes that a Class Representative Enhancement Payment of \$5,000 is fair, adequate, and reasonable for a class and settlement of this size, considering that there was nothing extraordinary about Plaintiff's contribution to the case.

The Court has identified the following minor issue with the moving papers, which must be addressed by Class Counsel before the Court will sign the Order Granting Final Approval and Judgment:

1. The administrator has not attested to the final total number of pay periods there were for purposes of calculating the Individual PAGA Settlement Share.

Class Counsel must submit the administrator's supplemental declaration within ten (10) court days.

Upon resolution of these issues, the Court will grant the instant motion and approve the following specific awards and disbursements from the GSA:

- Attorneys' fees totaling \$79,766.66 awarded to Class Counsel, with 50% or \$39,883.33 awarded to Mara Law Firm, PC and 50% or \$39,883.33 awarded to Lawyers for Employee and Consumer Rights in accordance with Class Counsel's fee-splitting agreement;
- Litigation costs totaling \$14,966.84 awarded to Class Counsel;
- Settlement administration costs of \$6,990.00 awarded to Apex Class Action, LLC;
- Class Representative Enhancement Payment of \$5,000.00 awarded to Plaintiff Francisco Arroyo Mora; and
- \$37,500.00 remitted to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) for its share of the PAGA penalties.

The Net Settlement Amount payable to all Class Members is \$95,076.50, including the \$12,500.00 in PAGA penalties to be distributed to the Aggrieved Employees, in accordance with the terms of the Settlement Agreement. Pursuant to the Settlement Agreement, Defendant is ordered to separately pay all employer payroll taxes owed on the wage portions of the individual settlement payments.

Within ten (10) court days, Class Counsel must submit a revised Proposed Order of Final Approval and Judgment with the following revisions:

1. Attorney information must be deleted from the caption page.
2. The proposed order and judgment should identify the Settlement Agreement by its actual name.
3. The proposed order and judgment should reference by name and ROA number the declaration(s) to which the Settlement Agreement and any amendments thereto are attached.
4. The proposed order and judgment should also state that no class members submitted workweek disputes.
5. The proposed order and judgment should specify the amount of the GSA.
6. The proposed order and judgment should state that the settlement administrator will post a copy of the order and judgment on the website for 180 days.
7. The proposed order and judgment should state that the settlement administrator's final report should be filed at least 16 court days before the Final Approval hearing.
8. The proposed order and judgment should state that the Court's continuing jurisdiction is pursuant to both California Code of Civil Procedure section 664.6 and California Rules of Court, rule 3.769(h).

Final Accounting is set for March 4, 2027, at 2:00 p.m. in Department CX102. Counsel shall submit the final report of the settlement administrator regarding the status of the settlement administration no later than sixteen (16) court days prior to the hearing date. The final report must include all information necessary for the Court to determine the total amount of the settlement funds actually paid to the Class Members and all others in accordance with the Settlement Agreement, as well as the amount of unclaimed funds, if any, remitted to the State Controller's Unclaimed Property Fund. If the settlement funds are not completely disbursed by the report deadline, Class Counsel must request a continuance. Failure to do so may result in the issuance of an Order to Show Cause re Monetary Sanctions.

Plaintiff is ordered to give notice of this ruling, including to the LWDA, and file proof of service within five (5) court days.