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**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO**

JENNIFER ANTONIO, individually, and on
behalf of other members of the general public
similarly situated;

Plaintiffs,

v.

BUCK EATS LLC, a California limited
liability company; BUCKHORN
ENTERPRISES LLC, a California limited
liability company; PICKAPPLE, LLC, a
California limited liability company;
PICKAPPLE FRANCHISE, LLC, a California
limited liability company; and DOES 1
through 100, inclusive;

Defendants.

Case No.: 23CV006104

Assigned for All Purposes to:
Honorable Jill Talley
Department 23

CLASS ACTION

**NOTICE OF MOTION AND MOTION
FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF
CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT,
CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATION,
APPROVAL OF CLASS NOTICE,
SETTING OF FINAL APPROVAL
HEARING DATE; MEMORANDUM OF
POINTS AND AUTHORITIES IN
SUPPORT THEREOF**

[Reservation No.: A-06104-001]

*[Declaration of Proposed Class Counsel
(Douglas Han) and [Proposed] Order filed
concurrently herewith]*

Hearing Date: November 15, 2024
Hearing Time: 9:00 a.m.
Hearing Place: Department 23

Complaint Filed: August 4, 2023
FAC Filed: July 3, 2024
Trial Date: None Set

1 **PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that on November 15, 2024 at 9:00 a.m., or as soon as the
2 matter may be heard, before the Honorable Jill Talley in Department 23 of the Sacramento County
3 Superior Court located at 720 9th Street Sacramento, California 95814, Plaintiffs Jennifer Antonio,
4 Brittany Welchman, and Rodrigo Fernandez (“Plaintiffs,” “Plaintiff Antonio,” “Plaintiff
5 Welchman,” and “Plaintiff Fernandez”) will and hereby do move for an order:

- 6 • Granting Preliminary Approval of the class action settlement described herein and
7 as set forth in the Class Action and PAGA Settlement Agreement (“Settlement
8 Agreement,” “Settlement,” or “Agreement”), attached as **Exhibit 2** to the
9 Declaration of Douglas Han, including, and not limited to, the means of allocation
10 and distribution of funds;
- 11 • Conditionally certifying the Class for settlement purposes only;
- 12 • Appointing Plaintiffs as the class representatives;
- 13 • Appointing Justice Law Corporation as Class Counsel;
- 14 • Approving the Court Approved Notice of Class Action Settlement and Hearing
15 Date for Final Court Approval (“Class Notice”) attached as **Exhibit A** to the
16 Settlement Agreement;
- 17 • Directing the mailing of the Class Notice with a postage-paid return envelope to
18 the Class;
- 19 • Approving the proposed deadlines for the settlement administration process;
- 20 • Approving ILYM Group, Inc. as the Administrator; and
- 21 • Scheduling a hearing to consider whether to grant Final Approval of the Settlement
22 Agreement, at which time the Court will also consider whether to grant Final
23 Approval of the requests for the Class Counsel Fees Payments, Class Counsel
24 Litigation Expenses Payment, Class Representative Service Payments,
25 Administration Expenses Payment, and approval of the allocation of the Private
26 Attorney General Act of 2004 (“PAGA”) Penalties.

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1 Pursuant to Local Rule 1.06(A), the court will make a tentative ruling on the merits of this
2 matter by 2:00 p.m., the court day before the hearing. The complete text of the tentative rulings
3 for the department may be downloaded off the court's website. If the party does not have online
4 access, they may call the dedicated phone number for the department as referenced in the local
5 telephone directory between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the court day before the
6 hearing and receive the tentative ruling. If you do not call the court and the opposing party by 4:00
7 p.m. the court day before the hearing, no hearing will be held.

8 This motion is based upon the following memorandum of points and authorities;
9 Declaration of Proposed Class Counsel (Douglas Han); [Proposed] Order filed concurrently with
10 this motion; pleadings and other records on file with the Court in this matter; and such documentary
11 evidence and oral argument as may be presented at the hearing on this motion.

12
13 Dated: August 15, 2024

JUSTICE LAW CORPORATION

14 By: 
15 Douglas Han
16 *Attorneys for Plaintiffs*

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1 **I. INTRODUCTION**

2 This motion seeks preliminary approval of a non-reversionary proposed wage-and-hour
3 class action settlement by Plaintiffs on behalf of themselves and all current and former hourly-paid
4 or non-exempt employees who worked for Defendants Buck Eats LLC, Buckhorn Enterprises
5 LLC, Pickapple, LLC, Pickapple Franchise, LLC, and Buckhorn Café, Inc. (“Defendant,”
6 “Defendant Buck Eats,” “Defendant Buckhorn Enterprises,” “Defendant Pickapple,” “Defendant
7 Pickapple Franchise,” and “Defendant Buckhorn Café”) within the State of California at any time
8 during the period from August 19, 2019, through August 6, 2024 or the date of preliminary
9 approval, whichever date is earlier (“Class,” “Class Members,” and “Class Period”). At the time
10 of this filing, the number of Class Members is estimated to be 1,343, which was confirmed by
11 Defendant. (Declaration of Douglas Han In Support of Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class
12 Action Settlement (“Han Decl.”), ¶¶ 8, 9.)

13 **II. BACKGROUND**

14 On August 4, 2023, Plaintiff Antonio filed a wage-and-hour class action lawsuit in the
15 Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento, alleging eight (8) causes of action. (Han
16 Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 10.)

17 On January 8, 2024, Plaintiff Welchman provided written notice to the California Labor
18 and Workforce Development Agency and Defendant. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 11; Exhibit 3.)

19 After engaging in discovery, investigations, and negotiation, the Parties remotely attended
20 mediation with the mediator Brandon McKelvey on June 3, 2024, resulting in the Parties reaching
21 a tentative settlement via a mediator’s proposal. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 12.)

22 On July 3, 2024, Plaintiff Antonio filed a First Amended Complaint adjusting the “class”
23 definition, adding Plaintiff Welchman and Plaintiff Fernandez as named plaintiffs, adding
24 Defendant Buckhorn Café as a named defendant, and added the following cause of action:
25 violation of Labor Code section 2698 (PAGA). (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 13; Exhibit 4.)

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III. INVESTIGATION/ LITIGATION HISTORY

a. Discovery, Investigation, and the Parties' Staunchly Conflicting Positions

Plaintiffs propounded form interrogatories, special interrogatories, requests for admission, and requests for production of documents. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 15.) Defendant responded to the formal discovery requests. (*Ibid.*) The Parties met and conferred and agreed to engage in an informal exchange of information and then eventually remotely attended mediation. (*Ibid.*)

Prior to the mediation, Defendant produced several documents relating to its policies, practices, and procedures. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 16.) As part of Defendant's production, Plaintiffs also reviewed time records, pay records, and information relating to the size and scope of the Class. (*Ibid.*) Several putative class members were also located and interviewed to attain a better understanding of the extent and frequency of the alleged day-to-day violations. (*Ibid.*)

Based on the information provided by Defendant and interviews with putative class members, Plaintiffs contend – and Defendant denies – Defendant: (1) failed to provide employees with legally mandated meal and rest breaks; (2) failed to pay employees for all hours worked; (3) failed to include non-discretionary bonuses in employees' regular rate of pay; (4) failed to reimburse employees for necessary business expenses; (5) issued noncompliant wage statements; and (6) is liable for waiting time penalties. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶¶ 18-25.)

b. The Parties Were Able to Reach an Agreement on Settlement of the Action

i. The Parties Attended Mediation Which Led to the Settlement

The Parties remotely attended mediation with an experienced mediator. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 26.) Under the auspices of the mediator, the Parties reached a settlement via a mediator's proposal, the terms were memorialized in the Settlement Agreement. (*Id.* at ¶ 26; Exhibits 2, 5.)

ii. The Settlement Was Reached as a Result of Arm's-Length Negotiations

The Settlement was reached because of arm's-length negotiations. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 29.) Though cordial and professional, the settlement negotiations have always been adversarial and non-collusive in nature. (*Ibid.*) At the mediation, the Parties' counsel conducted extensive arm's-length settlement negotiations until an agreement was ultimately reached. (*Ibid.*)

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1 Plaintiffs and Class Counsel recognize the expense and length of additional proceedings
2 necessary to continue the litigation through trial and any possible appeals. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶
3 30.) Plaintiffs and Class Counsel also considered the uncertainty and risk of further litigation,
4 potential outcome, and difficulties and delays inherent in such litigation. (*Ibid.*) Based on the
5 foregoing, Plaintiffs and Class Counsel believe the Settlement is a fair, adequate, and reasonable
6 settlement and is in the best interests of the Class Members. (*Ibid.*)

7 **iii. The Settlement Is the Result of Thorough Investigation and Discovery**

8 The Parties investigated and evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the claims and
9 defenses before reaching the Settlement and engaged in research and discovery to support the
10 Settlement. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 31.) The Settlement was only possible following significant
11 investigation and evaluation of the relevant policies and practices, permitting Class Counsel to
12 engage in a comprehensive analysis of liability and potential damages. (*Ibid.*) This case has
13 reached the stage where the Parties understand “the strength of the case; the reasonableness of the
14 settlement in light of the attendant risks of litigation, and in light of the best possible recovery”
15 sufficient to support the Settlement’s reasonableness, adequacy, and fairness. (Han Decl., *supra*,
16 at ¶ 31; *Boyd v. Bechtel Corp.* (N.D.Cal. 1979) 485 F.Supp. 610, 617.)

17 **c. Terms of the Proposed Settlement**

18 **i. Deductions from the Settlement**

19 The Parties agreed (subject to the Court’s approval) this action be settled and compromised
20 for the non-reversionary total sum of \$999,500 (“Gross Settlement Amount”) which includes: (1)
21 Class Counsel Fees Payment up to \$349,825 (35% of the Gross Settlement Amount); (2) Class
22 Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment up to \$20,000; (3) Class Representative Service Payments
23 totaling \$30,000; (4) Administration Expenses Payment up to \$20,000; and (5) PAGA Penalties
24 up to \$50,000. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 27.)

25 **ii. Calculating Settlement Payments**

26 After all Court-approved deductions from the Gross Settlement Amount, it is estimated
27 \$529,675 (“Net Settlement Amount”) will be paid to Participating Class Members – with a gross
28 *average* Individual Class Payment estimated at \$394.40. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 28.)

1 The Participating Class Members will receive a proportionate share of the Net Settlement
2 Amount using the formula set forth in the Settlement Agreement. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 26;
3 Exhibit 2, *supra*, at § C(2)(d).) Individual Class Payments will be allocated twenty percent (20%)
4 to the settlement of wage claims and eighty percent (80%) to the settlement of claims for interests
5 and penalties. (*Id.* at § C(2)(d)(i).)

6 The portion of the PAGA Penalties that is to be paid to each Aggrieved Employee shall be
7 determined using the formula set forth in the Settlement Agreement. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 26;
8 Exhibit 2, *supra*, at § C(2)(e)(i).) Aggrieved Employees' portion of the PAGA Penalties will be
9 allocated as one hundred percent (100%) penalties. (*Id.* at § C(2)(e)(ii).)

10 **iii. Notice to the Class**

11 No later than fourteen (14) calendar days after the Court grants Preliminary Approval of
12 the Settlement, Defendant will deliver the Class Data to the Administrator. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶
13 26; Exhibit 2, *supra*, at § G(4)(a).) No later than fourteen (14) calendar days after receiving the
14 Class Data, the Administrator will send the Class Notice with a translation to all Class Members
15 identified in the Class Data via first-class United States Postal Service mail. (*Id.* at § G(4)(c).)

16 **iv. Distribution of Funds**

17 The Gross Settlement Amount will be funded and distributed pursuant to the timeline and
18 manner set forth in the Settlement. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 26; Exhibit 2, *supra*, at §§ D(2), D(3).)
19 Uncashed settlement checks will be canceled and transmitted to the California Controller's
20 Unclaimed Property Fund in the name of the Class Member. (*Id.* at §§ D(3)(a), D(3)(c).)

21 **v. Release of Claims**

22 Effective on the date when Defendants fully fund the entire Gross Settlement Amount and
23 fund all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portion of the Individual Class Payments, all
24 Participating Class Members, on behalf of themselves and their former and present representatives,
25 agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, release the Released Parties from
26 the Released Class Claims. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 26; Exhibit 2, *supra*, at § E(2).)

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1 Effective on the date when Defendants fully fund the entire Gross Settlement Amount and
2 fund all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portion of the Individual Class Payments, all
3 Participating and Non-Participating Class Members, who are Aggrieved Employees, are deemed
4 to release, on behalf of themselves and their former and present representatives, agents, attorneys,
5 heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, the Released Parties from the Released PAGA
6 Claims. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 26; Exhibit 2, *supra*, at § E(3).)

7 Effective on the date when Defendants fully fund the entire Gross Settlement Amount and
8 fund all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portion of the Individual Class Payments,
9 Plaintiffs and their former and present spouses, representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs,
10 administrators, successors, and assigns generally release and discharge the Released Parties from
11 all claims, transactions, or occurrences that occurred during the Class Period. (Han Decl., *supra*,
12 at ¶ 26; Exhibit 2, *supra*, at § E(1).) Plaintiffs also expressly waive and relinquish the provisions,
13 rights, and benefits, if any, of section 1542 of the Civil Code. (*Id.* at § E(1)(a).)

14 With regards to class action releases, “““[A] court may release not only those claims alleged
15 in the complaint and before the court, but also claims which ‘could have been alleged by reason of
16 or in connection with any matter or fact set forth or referred to in’ the complaint.””” (*Amaro v.*
17 *Anaheim Arena Management, LLC* (2021) 69 Cal.App.5th 521, 537.) The scope of the releases in
18 this case are acceptable because they are limited to the scope of the allegations in the operative
19 complaints. Moreover, the released claims are “““based on *the identical factual predicate* as that
20 underlying the claims in the settled class action.””” (*Ibid.*) In other words, the released claims do
21 not “““go beyond the scope of the allegations in the operative complaint””” (*Ibid.*)

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1 **d. Counsel for Both Parties Are Experienced in Similar Litigation**

2 The Parties' counsel are experienced in wage-and-hour employment law and class actions.
3 (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶¶ 2-7; Exhibit 1.) Class Counsel have prosecuted numerous cases on behalf
4 of employees for Labor Code violations and are experienced and qualified to evaluate the class
5 claims, settlement versus trial on a fully informed basis, and viability of the defenses. (*Ibid.*) This
6 experience instructed Class Counsel on the risks and uncertainties of further litigation and guided
7 their determination to endorse the Settlement.¹ (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶¶ 2-7; Exhibit 1.)

8 **IV. ARGUMENT**

9 **a. Class Action Settlements Are Subject to Court Review**

10 California Rules of Court, rule 3.769 requires court approval for class action settlements.²
11 “Before final approval, the court must conduct an inquiry into the fairness of the proposed
12 settlement.” (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 3.769(g).) Rule 3.769 further requires a noticed motion for
13 preliminary approval of class settlements:

14 (a) A settlement or compromise of an entire class action, or a cause of action in
15 a class action, or as to a party, requires the approval of the court after
 hearing.

16 ...

17 (c) Any party to a settlement agreement may serve and file a written notice of
18 motion for preliminary approval of the settlement. The settlement
 agreement and proposed notice to class members must be filed with the
 motion, and the proposed order must be lodged with the motion.

19 Courts have discretion to approve settlements that are fair, not collusive, and consider ““all
20 the normal perils of litigation as well as the additional uncertainties inherent in complex class
21 actions.”” (*In re Beef Industry Antitrust Litigation* (5th Cir. 1979) 607 F.2d 167, 179, cert. den. *sub*
22 *nom. Iowa Beef Processors, Inc. v. Meat Price Investigators Ass’n* (1981) 452 U.S. 905.)

24 ¹ The final factor mentioned in *Dunk* – the number of objectors – is not determinable until
25 the Class Notice has been provided to the Class, and they have had an opportunity to respond. This
26 information will be provided to the Court in conjunction with the Motion for Final Approval of
27 Class Action Settlement.

28 ² The California Supreme Court has authorized California's trial courts to use Federal Rule
23 and cases applying it for guidance in considering class issues. (See *Vasquez v. Superior Court*
(1971) 4 Cal.3d 800, 821; see *Green v. Obledo* (1981) 29 Cal.3d 126, 145-146.) Where appropriate,
the Parties cite Federal Rule 23 and federal case law in addition to California law.

1 **b. The Proposed Settlement Is a Reasonable Compromise of Claims**

2 An understanding of the amount in controversy is an important factor in whether the
3 settlement “of the class members’ claims is reasonable in light of the strengths and weaknesses of
4 the claims and the risks of the particular litigation.” (*Kullar v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc.* (2008) 168
5 Cal.App.4th 116, 129; see also *Munoz v. BCI Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of Los Angeles* (2010) 186
6 Cal.App.4th 399, 409.) The most important factor in this regard is ““the strength of the case for
7 plaintiffs on the merits, balanced against the amount offered in settlement.”” (*Kullar v. Foot*
8 *Locker Retail, Inc., supra*, 168 Cal.App.4th at p. 130; see also *Munoz v. BCI Coca-Cola Bottling*
9 *Co. of Los Angeles, supra*, 186 Cal.App.4th at p. 409.)

10 *Kullar* instructs the court is not to “decide the merits of the case or to substitute its
11 evaluation of the most appropriate settlement for that of the attorneys.” (*Kullar v. Foot Locker*
12 *Retail, Inc., supra*, 168 Cal.App.4th at p. 133.) *Kullar* does not require a statement of the maximum
13 amount the class could recover if plaintiff prevailed on all his claims, provided there is a record
14 that allows ““an understanding of the amount that is in controversy and the realistic range of
15 outcomes of the litigation.”” (*Munoz v. BCI Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of Los Angeles, supra*, 186
16 Cal.App.4th at p. 409.) “[A]s the court does when it approves a settlement as in good faith under
17 Code of Civil Procedure § 877.6, the court must at least satisfy itself that the class settlement is
18 within the ‘ballpark’ of reasonableness.” (*Kullar*, at p. 133.)

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1 **i. The Settlement Amount of \$999,500 Is Fair and Reasonable**

2 The Settlement Agreement was only possible following significant investigation and
3 evaluation of the relevant policies and procedures, as well as the data produced, as referenced in
4 Section III above, permitting Class Counsel to engage in a comprehensive analysis of liability and
5 potential damages. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 31.)

6 The claims are predicated on the purported: (1) failure to properly calculate and pay
7 overtime wages; (2) failure to pay minimum wages; (3) failure to provide meal and rest breaks and
8 consistently and properly pay applicable premium wages; (4) failure to timely pay wages; (5)
9 failure to issue compliant wage statements; (6) failure to reimburse business expenses; (7) violation
10 of PAGA; and (8) violation of Business & Professions Code section 17200. (Han Decl., *supra*, at
11 ¶ 32.) Defendant vehemently denies the theories of liability. (*Id.* at ¶ 33.)

12 While Plaintiffs believe the case is suitable for certification, uncertainties with respect to
13 certification are always present. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 34.) As the California Supreme Court ruled
14 in *Sav-On Drug Stores, Inc. v. Superior Court* (2004) 34 Cal.4th 319, class certification is always
15 a matter of the trial court's sound discretion. (*Ibid.*) Decisions following *Sav-On Drug Stores, Inc.*
16 have reached different conclusions concerning certification of wage-and-hour claims.³ (Han Decl.,
17 *supra*, at ¶ 34.) Thus, the calculations for potential damages were discounted.

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25 ³ (See e.g. *Harris v. Superior Court* (2007) 154 Cal.App.4th 164 [reversing decertification
26 of class claiming misclassification and ordering summary adjudication in favor of employees],
27 review granted Nov. 28, 2007, (2007) 171 P.3d 545 [not cited as precedent, but rather for
28 illustrative purposes only]; *Walsh v. IKON Office Solutions, Inc.* (2007) 148 Cal.App.4th 1440
[affirming decertification of class claiming misclassification]; *Aguiar v. Cintas Corp. No. 2* (2006)
144 Cal.App.4th 121 [reversing denial of certification]; *Dunbar v. Albertson's Inc.* (2006) 141
Cal.App.4th 1422 [affirming denial of certification].)

1 **ii. The PAGA Penalties of \$50,000 Is Reasonable**

2 The provisions of the Labor Code potentially triggering PAGA penalties include Labor
3 Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 432.5, 510, 512(a),
4 551, 552, 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800, and 2802. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 43.)
5 Defendant asserted, regardless of the results of the underlying causes of action, PAGA penalties
6 are not mandatory but permissive and discretionary. (*Ibid.*) Defendant also maintained it had a
7 strong argument it would be unjust to award maximum PAGA penalties given the law’s current
8 unsettled state concerning PAGA penalties. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 43; *Thurman v. Bayshore*
9 *Transit Mgmt.* (2012) 203 Cal.App.4th 1112 [reducing penalties by 30% under this authority].)
10 Furthermore, Defendant argued without stacking and limited to the initial violation, the PAGA
11 penalties would be limited to about **\$48,500** (485 employees x \$100 penalty for initial violation)
12 on the low end and **\$339,500** (485 employees x \$100 penalty for initial violation x 7 theories of
13 recovery) on the high end. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶¶ 44-46.)

14 Plaintiffs recognized the risk that any PAGA award could be reduced. (Han Decl., *supra*,
15 at ¶ 47.) Many of the causes of action brought were also duplicative of the statutory claims. (*Ibid.*)
16 Allocating \$50,000 to PAGA civil penalties was reasonable given that Defendant is also paying
17 an additional \$949,500 in the class settlement. (*Ibid.*) When PAGA penalties are negotiated in
18 good faith and “there is no indication that [the] amount was the result of self-interest at the expense
19 of other Class Members,” such amounts are reasonable.⁴ (*Ibid.*)

20 Considering the defenses, supporting evidence, and position that the case is not suitable for
21 class treatment, the Settlement Agreement is reasonable, adequate, and fair.

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26 ⁴ (*Hopson v. Hanesbrands Inc.* (N.D.Cal. Apr. 3, 2009, No. CV-08-0844 EDL) 2009
27 U.S.Dist.LEXIS 33900, at *24; see e.g. *Nordstrom Com. Cases* (2010) 186 Cal.App.4th 576, 579,
28 “[T]rial court did not abuse its discretion in approving a settlement which does not allocate any
damages to the PAGA claims”.)

c. Discount Analysis Justifies the Settlement

Excluding the civil penalties, which could be completely discretionary, the total estimated potential exposure, assuming certification and prevailing at trial, would be about **\$8,075,640.90** on the low end and around **\$8,687,478.50** on the high end. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 48.)

Category	Potential Exposure	Certification Risk	Merits Risk	Realistic Exposure
Rest Break Premiums	\$1,039,797.67	70%	60%	\$124,775.72
Meal Break Premiums	\$880,766.48	60%	60%	\$140,922.64
Overtime/Minimum Wage: Off-the-Clock Work	\$1,222,979.93 to \$1,834,817.53	60%	60%	\$195,676.79 to \$293,570.81
Regular Rate	\$25,772.82	30%	50%	\$9,020.49
Unreimbursed Business Expenses	\$308,890	30%	70%	\$64,866.90
Wage Statement Penalty	\$945,750	60%	60%	\$151,320
Waiting Time Penalty	\$3,651,684	60%	60%	\$584,269.44
MAXIMUM TOTAL EXPOSURE	\$8,075,640.90 to \$8,687,478.50⁵			\$1,270,851.98 to \$1,368,746⁶

The realistic recovery for this case is about **\$1,270,851.98** on the low end and **\$1,368,746** on the high end. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 56.) The Gross Settlement Amount is about eleven percent (11.51%) of the maximum potential exposure and around seventy-three percent (73.02%) of the maximum realistic exposure at trial, which is a reasonable settlement. (*Ibid.*)

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⁵ (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶¶ 35-42.)

⁶ (*Id.* at ¶¶ 49-55.)

1 The only question at preliminary approval is whether the settlement is within the range of
2 possible approval. (*In re General Motors Corp. Engine Interchange Litigation* (7th Cir. 1979) 594
3 F.2d 1106, 1124; *Acosta v. TransUnion, LLC* (C.D. Cal. 2007) 240 F.R.D. 564, 575.) “The fact
4 that a proposed settlement may only amount to a fraction of the potential recovery does not, in and
5 of itself, mean that the proposed settlement is grossly inadequate and should be disapproved.”
6 (*Detroit v. Grinnell Corp.* (2d Cir. 1974) 495 F.2d 448, 455; see also *Linney v. Cellular Alaska*
7 *P’ship* (9th Cir. 1998) 151 F.3d 1234, 1242, “[I]t is the very uncertainty of outcome in litigation
8 and avoidance of wasteful and expensive litigation that induce consensual settlements. The
9 proposed settlement is not to be judged against a hypothetical or speculative measure of what
10 might have been achieved by the negotiators”). This settlement is in line with the realistic exposure
11 if Plaintiffs prevailed at trial and provides a significant recovery for the Class Members.

12 **d. Conditional Certification of the Class Is Appropriate**

13 Code of Civil Procedure section 382 “authorizes class actions ‘when the question is one of
14 a common or general interest, of many persons, or when the parties are numerous, and it is
15 impracticable to bring them all before the court.’” (*Sav-On Drug Stores, Inc. v. Superior Court*,
16 *supra*, 34 Cal.4th at p. 326.) California courts certify class actions if plaintiff identifies “both [1]
17 an ascertainable class and [2] a well-defined community of interest among class members.” (*Ibid.*)

18 The Class is ascertainable and numerous as to make it impracticable to join all Class
19 Members, and there are common questions of law and fact that predominate over any questions
20 affecting any individual Class Member. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 57.) Plaintiffs contends their claims
21 are typical of the claims of the Class, and Class Counsel will fairly and adequately protect the
22 interests of the Class. (*Ibid.*) Plaintiffs assert the prosecution of separate actions by individual Class
23 Members would create the risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications. (*Ibid.*)

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1 **i. The Proposed Class Is Ascertainable and Sufficiently Numerous**

2 “Ascertainability is required in order to give notice to putative class members as to whom
3 the judgment in the action will be res judicata.” (*Hicks v. Kaufman & Broad Home Corp.* (2001)
4 89 Cal.App.4th 908, 914.) “A class is ascertainable if it identifies a group of unnamed plaintiffs
5 by describing a set of common characteristics sufficient to allow a member of that group to identify
6 himself or herself as having a right to recover based on the description.” (*Bartold v. Glendale*
7 *Federal Bank* (2000) 81 Cal.App.4th 816, 828.) The proposed class must also be sufficiently
8 numerous. (*Linder v. Thrifty Oil Co.* (2000) 23 Cal.4th 429, 435.)

9 This case involves approximately 1,343 Class Members, meaning the Class is sufficiently
10 numerous. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 58; *Ghazaryan v. Diva Limousine, Ltd.* (2008) 169 Cal.App.4th
11 1524, 1531, n.5 [finding a proposed class of “as many as 190 current and former employees” is
12 sufficiently numerous].)

13 **ii. Class Members Share a Well-defined Community of Interest**

14 The community of interest requirement “embodies three factors: (1) predominant common
15 questions of law or fact; (2) class representatives with claims or defenses typical of the class; and
16 (3) class representatives who can adequately represent the class.” (*Sav-On Drug Stores, Inc. v.*
17 *Superior Court*, *supra*, 34 Cal.4th at p. 326.) “[T]he community of interest requirement for
18 certification *does not mandate that class members have uniform or identical claims.*” (*Capitol*
19 *People First v. Department of Developmental Services* (2007) 155 Cal.App.4th 676, 692 (emphasis
20 in original).) Rather, courts focus on the defendant’s internal policies and “pattern and practice . .
21 . in order to assess whether that common behavior toward similarly situated plaintiffs renders class
22 certification appropriate.” (*Ibid.*) The application of each of these factors is discussed below.

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Plaintiffs assert common issues of fact and law predominate as to each of the claims alleged. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 59.) Plaintiffs contend all Class Members were subject to the same or similar employment practices, policies, and procedures described in detail above. (*Ibid.*)

Typical claims rely on legal theories and facts that are substantially like those of other class members. (*Classen v. Weller* (1983) 145 Cal.App.3d 27, 46.)

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Plaintiffs have proven to be adequate class representatives. (Han Decl., *supra*, at ¶ 61.) Plaintiffs conducted themselves diligently and responsibly in representing the Class in this litigation, understand the fiduciary obligations, and actively participated in the prosecution of this case. (*Ibid.*) Plaintiffs spent time in meetings and conferences with Class Counsel to provide them with a complete understanding of the work experience and environment. (*Ibid.*) Plaintiffs also have no interest averse to the interests of the other Class Members. (*Ibid.*)

4. Class Action Is Superior for the Fair and Efficient Adjudication of this Controversy

A class action is superior to other available means for the fair and efficient adjudication of this controversy. Plaintiffs contend the joinder of all Class Members is impractical and that class treatment will permit many similarly situated persons to prosecute their common claims for settlement purposes simultaneously in a single forum without the duplication of effort and expense that numerous individual actions would necessitate. Because several Class Members are also current employees, Plaintiffs believe fear of retaliation further supports the superiority of class-wide relief as this fear often discourages current employees from seeking legal redress.

e. The Settlement Is Fair, Reasonable, and Adequate

In deciding whether to approve a proposed class action settlement under Code of Civil Procedure section 382, the Court must find a proposed settlement is “fair, adequate and reasonable.” (*Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.* (1996) 48 Cal.App.4th 1794, 1801.) A proposed class action settlement is presumed fair under the following circumstances: (1) parties reached settlement after arm’s-length negotiations; (2) investigation and discovery were sufficient to allow counsel and the court to act intelligently; (3) counsel is experienced in similar litigation; and (4) percentage of objectors is small. (*Id.* at p. 1802.) All these elements are present here.

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California Rules of Court, rule 3.769(f), provides:

The Class Notice meets all these requirements. The Class Notice advises the Class Members of their right to participate in the Settlement, how and when to object to or request exclusion from the Settlement, and date, time, and location of the Final Approval Hearing.

Plaintiffs submit the Settlement is in the Class's best interests. Under the applicable class action criteria and guidelines, the Settlement should be preliminarily approved by the Court, Class should be conditionally certified for settlement purposes, and Class Notice should be approved.

JUSTICE LAW CORPORATION

By: D. Han
Douglas Han
Attorneys for Plaintiffs

**PROOF OF SERVICE
1013A(3) CCP**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

I am employed in the County of Los Angeles, State of California. I am over the age of 18 and not a party to the within action. My business address is 751 N. Fair Oaks Avenue, Suite 101, Pasadena, CA 91103 and my electronic service address is ccastro@justicelawcorp.com

On August 15, 2024, I served the foregoing document described as

NOTICE OF MOTION AND MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT, CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATION, APPROVAL OF CLASS NOTICE, SETTING OF FINAL APPROVAL HEARING DATE; MEMORANDUM OF POINTS AND AUTHORITIES IN SUPPORT THEREOF

for the following case: **Jennifer Antonio, et al. v. Buck Eats LLC, et al.**
LWDA/Court Case No.: **LWDA Case No.: CM-1003696-24**
Court Case No.: 23CV006104
Sacramento County Superior Court

on interested parties in this action by electronically submitting as follows:

State of California
Labor & Workforce Development Agency
800 Capitol Mall, MIC-55
Sacramento, California 95814

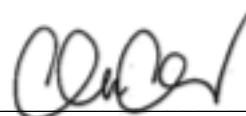
[X] BY ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

Pursuant to California Senate Bill No. 836, I caused the documents described above to be electronically submitted by and through the procedure stated on the website of the State of California Labor and Workforce Development Agency.

[X] STATE

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the above is true and correct.

Executed on August 15, 2024, at Pasadena, California.



Christina Castro