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as an aggrieved employee, and on behalf of all other
aggrieved employees

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

CLAUDIA ESTHER VALENZUELA, as an
aggrieved employee, and on behalf of all other
aggrieved employees under the Labor Code
Private Attorneys' General Act of 2004,

Plaintiff,

v.

STANDARD-SOUTHERN
CORPORATION., DBA LOS ANGELES
COLD STORAGE., a Delaware corporation;
and DOES 1 through 100, inclusive,

Defendants.

CASE NO.: **24STCV13705**

REPRESENTATIVE ACTION

**COMPLAINT UNDER THE LABOR
CODE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS'
GENERAL ACT OF 2004 FOR CIVIL
PENALTIES UNDER LABOR CODE
SECTIONS 210, 226.3, 558, 1174.5, 1197.1
AND 2699**

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

[Amount in Controversy Greater Than
\$25,000.00]

1 Plaintiff Claudia Esther Valenzuela, as an aggrieved employee, brings this Action under the
2 Labor Code Private Attorneys' General Act of 2004 ("PAGA") to collect civil penalties under
3 PAGA for all other aggrieved employees, and, in doing so, alleges as follows:

4 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

5 1. This is a representative action, pursuant to the Labor Code Private Attorneys General
6 Act of 2004, codified at Labor Code section 2698, *et seq.* ("PAGA"), against Standard-Southern
7 Corporation, DBA Los Angeles, Cold Storage, a Delaware corporation, and any of its respective
8 subsidiaries or affiliated companies within the State of California ("COLD STORAGE"), and
9 (collectively, and with DOES 1 through 100, as further defined below, "Defendants"), as a proxy of
10 the Labor and Workforce Development Agency of the State of California ("LWDA"), on behalf of
11 all other current and former non-exempt employees of Defendants working within the Civil Penalty
12 Period, as further defined herein, and, as it pertains to the alleged claims for failure to comply with
13 Labor Code sections 96, 98.6, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 226, 226.3, 227.3, 232, 232.5, 245, 246,
14 432, 432.3, 432.5, 432.7, 432.8, 1102.5, 1197.5, 1198.5, 1527, 3366, 3457, and 8397.4, on behalf
15 of all employees of Defendants working within the Civil Penalty Period (collectively, "Aggrieved
16 Employees").

17 2. Jurisdiction exists in the Superior Court of the State of California pursuant to Code
18 of Civil Procedure section 410.10.

19 3. Venue is proper in Los Angeles County, California pursuant to Code of Civil
20 Procedure sections 392, *et seq.* because, among other things, Los Angeles County is where the
21 causes of action complained of herein arose; the county in which the employment relationship
22 began; the county in which performance of the employment contract, or part of it, between Plaintiff
23 and Defendants was due to be performed; the county in which the employment contract, or part of
24 it, between Plaintiff and Defendants was actually performed; and the county in which Defendants,
25 or some of them, reside. Moreover, the unlawful acts alleged herein have a direct effect on Plaintiff
26 and Aggrieved Employees in Los Angeles County, and because Defendants employ numerous
27 Aggrieved Employees in Los Angeles County.

28 4. Plaintiff is an "aggrieved employee" under PAGA, as Plaintiff was employed by

1 Defendants during the applicable statutory period and suffered one or more of the Labor Code
2 violations set forth herein. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks to recover civil penalties, as the term “civil
3 penalty” is defined under *ZB N.A. v. Superior Court* (2019) 8 Cal.5th 175, under the Labor Code
4 Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, codified at Labor Code section 2698, *et seq.* (“PAGA”) plus
5 reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs, for all other aggrieved current and former employees of
6 Defendants during the Civil Penalty Period. Plaintiff does not seek to assert his own claim for civil
7 penalties under PAGA as part of this Action.

8 5. Specifically, Plaintiff seeks to recover PAGA civil penalties through a representative
9 action permitted by PAGA and the California Supreme Court in, among other authorities, *Arias v.*
10 *Superior Court* (2009) 46 Cal.4th 969. According to the same authorities, class certification of the
11 PAGA allegations described herein is not required.

12 6. During the period beginning one (1) year preceding the provision of notice to the
13 LWDA regarding the herein-described Labor Code violations (the “Civil Penalty Period”),
14 Defendants violated, *inter alia*, Labor Code sections 96, 98.6, 200, 201, 201.3, 202, 203, 204, 210,
15 212, 213, 221, 223, 226, 226.3, 226.7, 227.3, 232, 232.5, 245, 246, 404, 432, 432.3, 432.5, 432.7,
16 432.8, 510, 512, 558, 1102.5, 1174, 1174.5, 11821.12, 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1197.5, 1198.5, 1527,
17 2699, 2802, 2810.5, 3366, 3457, and 8397.4, among others, California Code of Regulations, Title
18 8, Section 3395, Business and Professions Code sections 16600, 16700, and 17200, Government
19 Code section 12952, as well as applicable Wage Orders.

20 7. Labor Code section 2699, subdivisions (a) and (g), authorizes aggrieved employees
21 on behalf of all other aggrieved current and former employees within the statutory period, to bring
22 a civil action to recover civil penalties pursuant to the procedures specified in Labor Code section
23 2699.3 without asserting a claim to bring Plaintiff’s own claim for civil penalties under PAGA.
24 (*See, e.g., Balderas v. Fresh Start Harvesting, Inc.*) Specifically, Plaintiff does not seek to recover
25 Plaintiff’s 25% share of civil penalties for the particular Labor Code violations Plaintiff experienced.
26 Rather, this is a purely representative PAGA action wherein Plaintiff seeks to recover all civil
27 penalties for the Labor Code violations experienced by third-party aggrieved employees (Aggrieved
28 Employees) and the State of California’s 75% of the civil penalties for the Labor Code violations

1 Plaintiff experienced.

2 8. On or around March 27, 2024, Plaintiff provided written notice pursuant to Labor
3 Code section 2699.3 online and by certified mail, with return receipt requested, of Defendants'
4 violation of various, including the herein-described, provisions of the Labor Code, to the LWDA,
5 as well as by certified mail, with return receipt requested to Defendants, and each of them.

6 9. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, subdivision (a)(2)(A), the LWDA did not
7 provide notice of its intention to investigate Defendants' alleged violations within sixty-five (65)
8 calendar days of the March 27, 2024, postmarked date of the herein-described notice sent by
9 Plaintiff to the LWDA and Defendants.

10 **PAGA REPRESENTATIVE ALLEGATIONS**

11 10. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants had and have a policy or practice
12 of failing to pay overtime wages to Aggrieved Employees in the State of California in violation of
13 California state wage and hour laws as a result of, without limitation, Aggrieved Employees working
14 over eight (8) hours per day, forty (40) hours per week, and/or seven (7) straight workdays in a
15 workweek without paying them proper overtime wages, as a result of, without limitation, failing to
16 accurately track and/or pay for all minutes actually worked; engaging, suffering, or permitting
17 employees to work off the clock, including, without limitation, by requiring employees: to remain
18 on-call, to suffer under Defendants' control to complete pre-shift tasks before clocking in and post-
19 shift tasks after clocking out, to clock out for meal periods and continue working, to don and doff
20 uniforms off the clock, to attend company meetings off the clock, to make phone calls or drive off
21 the clock; failing to include all forms of remuneration, including non-discretionary bonuses,
22 incentive pay, meal allowances, and other forms of remuneration into the regular rate of pay for the
23 pay periods where overtime was worked and the additional compensation was earned for the purpose
24 of calculating the overtime rate of pay; detrimental rounding of employee time entries, editing and/or
25 manipulation of time entries to show less hours than actually worked, for paying straight pay instead
26 of overtime pay, and by attempting but failing to properly implement an alternative workweek
27 schedule ("AWS") (including, without limitation, by failing to implement a written agreement
28 designating the regularly scheduled alternative workweek in which the specified number of work

1 days and work hours are regularly recurring; failing to adopt the AWS in a secret ballot election,
2 before the performance of work, by at least a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the affected employees in the
3 work unit; failing to follow the notice/disclosures procedures prior to any AWS election; and/or
4 failing to register an AWS election with the State of California, as required by Labor Code section
5 511 and applicable Wage Orders), to the detriment of Aggrieved Employees.

6 11. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants had and have a practice or policy
7 of failing to compensate Aggrieved Employees with minimum wages for all hours worked or
8 otherwise under Defendants' control as a result of, without limitation, failing to accurately track
9 and/or pay for all minutes actually worked; by requiring Aggrieved Employees: to remain on-call;
10 to suffer under Defendants' control to complete pre-shift tasks before clocking in and post-shift
11 tasks after clocking out, to clock out for meal periods and continue working, to don and doff
12 uniforms off the clock, to attend company meetings off the clock, to make phone calls or drive off
13 the clock; detrimental rounding of employee time entries, editing and/or manipulation of time entries
14 to show less hours than actually worked; failing to pay reporting time pay; paid time off and vacation
15 time owed; and failing to pay split shift premiums, to the detriment of Aggrieved Employees.

16 12. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants had and have a policy or practice
17 of failing to provide Aggrieved Employees a thirty (30) minute uninterrupted, timely, and complete
18 meal period for days on which the employee worked in excess of five (5) and ten (10) hours per day
19 without being afforded uninterrupted, timely, and complete 30-minute meal periods or
20 compensation in lieu thereof including, without limitation, by interrupting meal periods; not
21 providing timely meal periods; failing to provide first and second meal periods; providing short
22 meal periods; requiring that employees carry cellular telephones or walkie-talkies during meal
23 periods; not permitting employees to leave the premises; otherwise requiring on-duty/on-call meal
24 periods; and auto-deducting meal periods that could not be auto-deducted by law or during which
25 employees worked, as required by California wage and hour laws.

26 13. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants had and have a policy or practice
27 of failing to provide Aggrieved Employees paid, uninterrupted, timely, and complete rest periods of
28 at least ten (10) minutes per four (4) hours worked or major fractions thereof, or compensation in

1 lieu thereof, including, without limitation, by failing to provide rest periods all together; requiring
2 that they be bundled together and/or with meal periods; interrupting them; requiring that employees
3 carry cellular telephones or walkie-talkies during rest periods not providing them in a timely fashion;
4 and not permitting employees to leave the premises; and otherwise requiring on-duty/on-call rest
5 periods, as required by California wage and hour laws.

6 14. At all times relevant hereto, Defendants had and have a policy or practice of failing
7 to permit Aggrieved Employees from taking cooldown rest periods as required under California
8 Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 3395, and have failed to pay premium pay in lieu thereof under
9 Labor Code section 226.7.

10 15. At all times relevant hereto, Defendants had and have a policy or practice of failing
11 to pay premium payments under Labor Code section 226.7 to Aggrieved Employees for non-
12 compliant meal periods and rest periods, as well as the failure to provide cooldown periods, at the
13 proper regular rate of pay in violation of Labor Code sections 512, 226.7, and applicable wage
14 orders.

15 16. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants had and have a policy or practice of
16 unlawfully deducting wages due, or to become due, or as an advance on wages to be earned; an
17 order, check, draft, note, memorandum, gift card, or other acknowledgment of indebtedness, (unless
18 it was negotiable and payable in cash, on demand, without discount, at some established place of
19 business in the state), the name and address of which must but did not appear on the instrument, and
20 at the time of its issuance and for a reasonable time thereafter, which must be but was not at least
21 30 days, the maker or drawer did not have sufficient funds in, or credit arrangement, or
22 understanding with the drawee for its payment of any scrip, coupon, or other thing redeemable, in
23 merchandise, or purporting to be payable or redeemable otherwise than in money. Plaintiff is further
24 informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that such wages were not compensated at the
25 "regular rate" of compensation as provided under Labor Code sections 226.7 and 510, subsection
26 (a).

27 17. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants had and have a policy or practice
28 of failing to comply with Labor Code section 226, subdivision (a) by intentionally failing to furnish

1 Aggrieved Employees with itemized wage statements that accurately reflect gross wages earned;
2 total hours worked by the employee; net wages earned; all deductions; all applicable hourly rates in
3 effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by
4 the employee; the legal name of the employer and/or the name and address of the legal entity
5 securing the employer's services if the employer is a farm labor contractor; and other such
6 information as required by Labor Code section 226, subdivision (a).

7 18. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants had and have a policy or practice
8 of failing to comply with Labor Code section 226, subdivision (a) by intentionally failing to furnish
9 Aggrieved Employees with documents signed to obtain or hold employment under Labor Code
10 section 432, personnel records under Labor Code section 1198.5, and time records under Labor
11 Code section 1174, making it difficult for Aggrieved Employees to calculate their unpaid wages
12 and/or premium payments, to the detriment of Aggrieved Employees.

13 19. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants had and have a policy or practice
14 of failing to timely pay Aggrieved Employees, among other wages, all wages owed as a result of
15 Defendants' practice or policy of failing to pay, among other wages, overtime wages at the regular
16 rate of pay, minimum wages, premium wages at the regular rate of pay, paid time off, paid sick
17 leave, and vacation time owed as required by Labor Code sections 201, 202, and 203.

18 20. At all relevant times herein, Defendants had and have a policy or practice of failing
19 to pay Aggrieved Employees their paid time off and vacation time owed upon separation of
20 employment as wages at their final rate of pay in violation of Labor Code section 227.3 and
21 applicable Wage Orders.

22 21. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants have had a policy or practice of
23 failing and refusing, and continue to fail and refuse, to reimburse employees, including, without
24 limitation, Aggrieved Employees, with their costs incurred for driving personal vehicles (*i.e.*,
25 mileage and gas), purchasing uniforms, including, without limitation, for steel-toe boots, non-slip
26 shoes, and other safety and/or personal protective equipment ("PPE"), providing uniform and other
27 deposits, separately laundering mandatory uniforms, for the purchase of tools, and for the purchase
28 and maintenance of cellular phones and cellular phone plans, in direct consequence of the discharge

1 of their duties, or of their obedience to the directions of Defendants, as required by Labor Code
2 2802.

3 22. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants have had a policy or practice of
4 failing to comply with the notice requirements of Labor Code section 2810.5 (*i.e.*, the Wage Theft
5 Protection Act of 2011) by, among other things, failing to provide Aggrieved Employees with the
6 rates of pay and overtime rates of pay applicable to their employment; allowances claimed as part
7 of the minimum wage; the regular payday designated by Defendants; the name, address, and
8 telephone number of the workers' compensation insurance carrier; information regarding paid sick
9 leave; and other pertinent information required to be disclosed by Defendants under Labor Code
10 section 2810.5.

11 23. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants failed to provide Aggrieved
12 Employees with the amount of paid sick leave required to be provided pursuant to California law
13 (including, without limitation Labor Code section 245, *et seq.*), and also did not permit its use upon
14 request as contemplated under California laws, to the detriment of Aggrieved Employees.

15 24. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants had or have a policy or practice
16 of failing to reimburse deposits made, including uniform deposits, together with all interest owed at
17 the separation of employment in violation of Labor Code section 404.

18 25. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants have had a policy or practice of
19 failing to pay Aggrieved Employees their wages in accordance with Labor Code Section 204, which
20 requires that: "[l]abor performed between the 1st and 15th days, inclusive, of any calendar month
21 shall be paid for between the 16th and 26th day of the month during which the labor was performed,
22 and labor performed between the 16th and the last day, inclusive of any calendar month, shall be
23 paid for between the 1st and 10th day of the following month."

24 26. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants have had, and continue to have, a policy
25 of failing to provide all working employees with suitable seats when the nature of the work
26 reasonably permits the use of seats. Defendants have also failed to place an adequate number of
27 seats in reasonable proximity to the work area and/or permitted employees to use such seats when
28

1 it does not interfere with the performance of their duties and employees are not engaged in the active
2 duties of their employment, and the nature of their work requires standing.

3 27. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants have had, and continue to have, a policy
4 of failing to provide all temporary workers with owed wages weekly by not later than the regular
5 payday of the following week.

6 28. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants have had, and continue to have, a policy
7 of failing to provide adequate and readily accessible sanitation facilities; a regular schedule for
8 servicing, cleaning, and supplying each facility to ensure it is maintained in a clean, sanitary and
9 serviceable condition; an adequate supply of suitable cleansing agents, water, single-use towels or
10 blowers; and a sufficient number of toilets to be used by each sex of employee.

11 29. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants have had, and continue to have, a policy
12 of failing to conducting unlawful background checks on prospective and current employees prior to
13 making a conditional offer. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that
14 Defendants violated applicable laws by, without limitation: requiring job applicants and employees
15 to disclose their conviction history before Defendants made a conditional offer of employment;
16 inquiring into or considering the conviction history of applicants before Defendants made any
17 conditional offers of employment; considering, distributing, or disseminating information about
18 arrests not followed by conviction, referrals to or participation in a pretrial or posttrial diversion
19 program, convictions that have been sealed, dismissed, expunged, or statutorily eradicated pursuant
20 to law, or any conviction for which the convicted person has received a full pardon or has been
21 issued a certificate of rehabilitation, while conducting conviction history background checks in
22 connection with any applications for employment; intending to deny an applicant a position of
23 employment solely or in part because of the applicant's conviction history; and asking applicants
24 for employment to disclose, through any written form or verbally, information concerning or related
25 to an arrest, detention, processing, diversion, supervision, adjudication, or court disposition that
26 occurred while the person was subject to the process and jurisdiction of the juvenile court, to the
27 detriment of Aggrieved Employees
28

1 30. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants have had, and continue to have, a practice
2 or policy of relying on the salary history information of an applicant for employment as a factor in
3 determining whether to offer employment to an applicant or what salary to offer the applicant in
4 violation of Labor Code section 432.3 by including, on Defendants' application for employment, an
5 inquiry regarding current and/or former salary history information, including, without limitation,
6 compensation and benefits of the applicant for employment.

7 31. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants have had, and continue to have, a practice
8 or policy of requiring Aggrieved Employees to agree in writing to confidentiality policies that
9 unlawfully restrain trade by prohibiting Aggrieved Employees from speaking with prospective
10 employers about their work with Defendants, including but not limited to their wages and working
11 conditions. Defendants also required Aggrieved Employees to inform prospective employers of
12 Defendants' restrictions of Aggrieved Employees' freedom to work.

13 32. At all relevant times mentioned herein, Defendants had and have a policy or practice
14 of preventing Aggrieved Employees from using or disclosing the skills, knowledge and experience
15 they obtained at Defendants for purposes of competing with Defendants, including, without
16 limitation, preventing Aggrieved Employees from disclosing their wages in negotiating a new job
17 with a prospective employer, and from disclosing who else works at Defendants and under what
18 circumstances that they might be receptive to an offer from a rival employer. Plaintiff is informed
19 and believes that this policy and/or practice violates Business and Professions Code sections 17200,
20 16600 and 16700, and, by virtue thereof, various provisions of the Labor Code, including Labor
21 Code sections 232, 232.5, and 1197.5, subdivision (k).

22 33. Defendants had and have a policy or practice of preventing Aggrieved Employees
23 from disclosing violations of state and federal law, either within Defendants to their managers or
24 outside to private attorneys or government officials, among others, in violation of Business and
25 Professions Code section 17200, and, thus, in violation of Labor Code section 1102.5. In addition,
26 Plaintiff is informed and believes that Defendants' herein-described policies and/or practices
27 prevent Aggrieved Employees from disclosing information about unsafe or discriminatory working
28 conditions, or about wage and hour violations in violation of Labor Code section 232 and 232.5.

34. Defendants had and have a policy or practice of preventing Aggrieved Employees from engaging in lawful conduct during non-work hours, thus violating state statutes entitling employees to disclose wages, working conditions, and illegal conduct, including, without limitation, Labor Code sections 96, subdivision (k), 98.6, 232, 232.5, and 1197.5, subdivision (k). Plaintiff is informed and believes that this lawful conduct includes the exercise of Aggrieved Employee's constitutional rights of freedom of speech and economic liberty.

35. Plaintiff, in Plaintiff's representative capacity *only*, seeks civil penalties under Labor Code sections 210, 226.3, 558, 1174.5, 1197.1, and 2699 for the herein-described acts on behalf of only and all other Aggrieved Employees, which violate the California Labor Code as described above.

PARTIES

A. Plaintiff

36. Plaintiff is a resident of the State of California. At all relevant times herein, Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants employed Plaintiff as a non-exempt employee, with duties that included, but were not limited to, providing customer service, data entry, and being a receptionist. Plaintiff is informed and believes that Plaintiff worked for Defendants from approximately September of 1994 through approximately March of 2023.

B. Defendants

37. Plaintiff is informed and believes and based thereon alleges that defendant COLD STORAGE is, and at all times relevant hereto was, a corporation organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Delaware and doing business in the County of Los Angeles, State of California.

38. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, associate, or otherwise, of defendants sued herein as DOES 1 through 100, inclusive, are currently unknown to Plaintiff, who therefore sues defendants by such fictitious names under Code of Civil Procedure section 474. Plaintiff is informed and believes and based thereon alleges that each of the defendants designated herein as DOE is legally responsible in some manner for the unlawful acts referred to herein. Plaintiff will seek leave of court to amend this Complaint to reflect the true names and capacities of

1 the defendants designated hereinafter as DOES when such identities become known. Plaintiff is
2 informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that each defendant acted in all respects pertinent
3 to this action, as the agent of the other defendant(s), carried out a joint scheme, business plan or
4 policy in all respects pertinent hereto, and the acts of each defendant are legally attributable to the
5 other defendants. Whenever, heretofore or hereinafter, reference is made to “Defendants,” it shall
6 include COLD STORAGE, and any of their parent, subsidiary, or affiliated companies within the
7 State of California, as well as DOES 1 through 100 identified herein.

8 **JOINT LIABILITY ALLEGATIONS**

9 39. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that at all times
10 mentioned herein, each of the defendants was the agent, principal, employee, employer,
11 representative, joint venture or co-conspirator of each of the other defendants, either actually or
12 ostensibly, and in doing the things alleged herein acted within the course and scope of such agency,
13 employment, joint venture, and conspiracy.

14 40. All of the acts and conduct described herein of each and every corporate defendant
15 was duly authorized, ordered, and directed by the respective and collective defendant corporate
16 employers, and the officers and management-level employees of said corporate employers. In
17 addition thereto, said corporate employers participated in the aforementioned acts and conduct of
18 their said employees, agents, and representatives, and each of them; and upon completion of the
19 aforesaid acts and conduct of said corporate employees, agents, and representatives, the defendant
20 corporation respectively and collectively ratified, accepted the benefits of, condoned, lauded,
21 acquiesced, authorized, and otherwise approved of each and all of the said acts and conduct of the
22 aforementioned corporate employees, agents and representatives.

23 41. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that despite the
24 formation of the purported corporate existence of COLD STORAGE, and DOES 1 through 50,
25 inclusive (the “Alter Ego Defendants”), they, and each of them, are one and the same with DOES
26 51 through 100 (“Individual Defendants”), and each of them, due to, but not limited to, the following
27 reasons:

28 ///

1 a. The Alter Ego Defendants are completely dominated and controlled by the
2 Individual Defendants who personally committed the wrongful and illegal acts and violated the laws
3 as set forth in this Complaint, and who have hidden and currently hide behind the Alter Ego
4 Defendants to perpetrate frauds, circumvent statutes, or accomplish some other wrongful or
5 inequitable purpose;

6 b. The Individual Defendants derive actual and significant monetary benefits by
7 and through the Alter Ego Defendants' unlawful conduct, and by using the Alter Ego Defendants as
8 the funding source for the Individual Defendants' own personal expenditures;

9 c. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that the Individual
10 Defendants and the Alter Ego Defendants, while really one and the same, were segregated to appear
11 as though separate and distinct for purposes of perpetrating a fraud, circumventing a statute, or
12 accomplishing some other wrongful or inequitable purpose;

13 d. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges, that the business affairs
14 of the Individual Defendants and the Alter Ego Defendants are, and at all relevant times mentioned
15 herein were, so mixed and intermingled that the same cannot reasonably be segregated, and the same
16 are inextricable confusion. The Alter Ego Defendants are, and at all relevant times mentioned herein
17 were, used by the Individual Defendants as mere shells and conduits for the conduct of certain of
18 their, and each of their affairs. The Alter Ego Defendants are, and at all relevant times mentioned
19 herein were, the alter egos of the Individual Defendants;

20 e. The recognition of the separate existence of the Individual Defendants from
21 the Alter Ego Defendants would promote injustice insofar that it would permit these defendants to
22 insulate themselves from liability to Plaintiff for violations to the Civil Code, Government Code,
23 and other statutory violations. The corporate existence of these defendants should thus be
24 disregarded in equity and for the ends of justice because such disregard is necessary to avoid fraud
25 and injustice to Plaintiff herein;

26 f. Accordingly, the Alter Ego Defendants constitute the alter ego of the
27 Individual Defendants (and vice versa), and the fiction of their separate corporate existence must be
28 disregarded.

42. As a result of the aforementioned facts, Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Defendants, and each of them, are joint employers.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

(Civil Penalties Under the Private Attorneys' General Act (2004) – Against All Defendants)

43. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all of the allegations set forth in the preceding paragraphs as though fully set forth hereat.

Civil Penalties Under Labor Code § 210

44. At all relevant times herein, Labor Code section 204, requires and required that: “[l]abor performed between the 1st and 15th days, inclusive, of any calendar month shall be paid for between the 16th and 26th day of the month during which the labor was performed, and labor performed between the 16th and the last day, inclusive, of any calendar month, shall be paid for between the 1st and 10th day of the following month.”

45. At all relevant times herein, Labor Code section 210, subdivision (a) states and stated that “[i]n addition to, and entirely independent and apart from, any other penalty provided in this article, every person who fails to pay the wages of each employee as provided in Sections 201.3, 204, 204b, 204.1, 205, 205.5, and 1197.5, shall be subject to a civil penalty as follows: (1) For any initial violation, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each failure to pay each employee” and “(2) For each subsequent violation, or any willful or intentional violation, two hundred dollars (\$200) for each failure to pay each employee, plus 25 percent of the amount unlawfully withheld.”

46. At all relevant times herein, Defendants have had a consistent policy or practice of failing to pay Aggrieved Employees during their employment on a timely basis as per Labor Code section 204. Thus, pursuant to Labor Code section 210, Aggrieved Employees are entitled to recover civil penalties for Defendants’ violations of Labor Code section 204, in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each Aggrieved Employee for each initial violation per employee, and two hundred dollars (\$200) for each Aggrieved Employee for each subsequent violation in connection with each payment that was made in violation of Labor Code section 204.

47. Plaintiff does not seek to recover Plaintiff’s 25% share of civil penalties for the particular Labor Code violation(s) that Plaintiff experienced.

Civil Penalties Under Labor Code § 226.3

48. Defendants had and have a policy or practice of failing to comply with Labor Code section 226, subdivision (a) by intentionally failing to furnish Plaintiff and Aggrieved Employees with itemized wage statements that accurately reflect gross wages earned; total hours worked; net wages earned; the name and address of each employer with whom they have been placed to work; all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate; the legal name of the employer and/or the name and address of the legal entity securing the employer's services if the employer is a farm labor contractor; and other such information as required by Labor Code section 226, subdivision (a).

49. Labor Code section 226.3 states that "[a]ny employer who violates subdivision (a) of Section 226 shall be subject to a civil penalty in the amount of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) per employee per violation in an initial citation and one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per employee for each violation in a subsequent citation, for which the employer fails to provide the employee a wage deduction statement or fails to keep the records required in subdivision (a) of Section 226."

50. Labor Code section 226.3 further provides that "[t]he civil penalties provided for in this section are in addition to any other penalty provided by law."

51. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants had and have a policy or practice of failing to furnish Aggrieved Employees with itemized wage statements that accurately reflect gross wages earned; total hours worked; net wages earned; all deductions; all applicable hourly rates in effect and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate in effect during the pay period; the legal name of the employer and/or the name and address of the legal entity securing the employer's services if the employer is a farm labor contractor; and other such information as required by Labor Code section 226, subdivision (a).

52. Pursuant to Labor Code section 226.3, Aggrieved Employees are entitled to recover civil penalties for Defendants' violation of Labor Code section 226, subdivision (a) in the amount of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for each Aggrieved Employee per pay period for the initial violation, and one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for each Aggrieved Employee per pay period for each subsequent violation.

53. Plaintiff does not seek to recover Plaintiff's 25% share of civil penalties for the particular Labor Code violation(s) that Plaintiff experienced.

Violation of Labor Code § 558

54. Pursuant to Labor Code section 558, subdivision (a): “Any employer or other person acting on behalf of an employer who violates, or causes to be violated . . . any provision regulating hours and days of work in any of the Industrial Welfare Commission” shall be subject to a civil penalty as follows:

- (1) For any initial violation, fifty dollars (\$50) for each underpaid employee and for each pay period for which the employee was underpaid in addition to an amount sufficient to recover underpaid wages;
- (2) For each subsequent violation, one hundred dollars (\$100) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the employee was underpaid in addition to an amount sufficient to recover underpaid wages;
- (3) Wages recovered pursuant to this section shall be paid to the affected employee.”

55. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants, and each of them, violated, or caused to be violated, the Labor Code sections described herein, including causing Aggrieved Employees not to: be paid with the rates of pay and overtime rates of pay applicable to their employment, allowances claimed as part of the minimum wage, the regular payday designated by employer, the name of the employer, including any “doing business as” names used, the name, address, and telephone number of the workers’ compensation insurance carrier, information regarding paid sick leave, and other pertinent information.

56. As a direct and proximate result of the herein-described Labor Code violations, pursuant to Labor Code section 558, Aggrieved Employees are entitled to recover civil penalties for Defendants' herein-described Labor Code violations in the amount fifty dollars (\$50) for each Aggrieved Employee per pay period for the initial violation, and one hundred dollars (\$100) for each Aggrieved Employee per pay period for each subsequent violation.

57. Plaintiff does not seek to recover Plaintiff's 25% share of civil penalties for the particular Labor Code violation(s) that Plaintiff experienced.

Violation of Labor Code § 1174.5

58. At all times mentioned herein, Labor Code section 1174, subdivision (b) has required every person employing labor in California to “[a]llow any member of the commission or the employees of the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement free access to the place of business or employment of the person to secure any information or make any investigation that they are authorized by this chapter to ascertain or make. The commission may inspect or make excerpts, relating to the employment of employees, from the books, reports, contracts, payrolls, documents, or papers of the person.”

59. At all times mentioned herein, Labor Code section 1174, subdivision (c) has required every person employing labor in California to “[k]eep a record showing the names and addresses of all employees employed and the ages of all minors.”

60. At all times mentioned herein, Labor Code section 1174, subdivision (d) has required every person employing labor in California to “[k]eep, at a central location in the state or at the plants or establishments at which employees are employed, payroll records showing the hours worked daily by and the wages paid to, and the number of piece-rate units earned by and applicable piece rate paid to, employees employed at the respective plants or establishments. These records shall be kept in accordance with rules established for this purpose by the commission, but in any case, shall be kept on file for not less than three years. An employer shall not prohibit an employee from maintaining a personal record of hours worked, or, if paid on a piece-rate basis, piece-rate units earned.”

61. Pursuant to Labor Code section 1174.5, “[a]ny person employing labor who willfully fails to maintain the records required by subdivision (c) of [Labor Code] Section 1174 or accurate and complete records required by subdivision (d) of [Labor Code] Section 1174, or to allow any member of the commission or employees of the division to inspect records pursuant to subdivision (b) of [Labor Code] Section 1174, shall be subject to a civil penalty of five hundred dollars (\$500).

62. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants have willfully failed to keep adequate or accurate time records including wage statements and similar payroll documents under Labor Code section 226, documents signed to obtain or hold employment

1 under Labor Code section 432, personnel records under Labor Code section 1198.5, and time records
2 under Labor Code section 1174.

3 63. As a direct and proximate result of the herein-described Labor Code violations,
4 pursuant to Labor Code section 1174.5, Aggrieved Employees are entitled to recover civil penalties
5 for Defendants' herein-described Labor Code violations in the amount of five hundred dollars
6 (\$500) per violation per Aggrieved Employee.

7 64. Plaintiff does not seek to recover Plaintiff's 25% share of civil penalties for the
8 particular Labor Code violation(s) that Plaintiff experienced.

9 Violation of Labor Code § 1197.1

10 65. Pursuant to Labor Code section 1197.1, subdivision (a): "Any employer or other
11 person acting either individually or as an officer, agent, or employee of another person, who pays
12 or causes to be paid to any employee a wage less than the minimum fixed by an applicable state or
13 local law, or by an order of the commission shall be subject to a civil penalty, restitution of wages,
14 liquidated damages payable to the employee, and any applicable penalties imposed pursuant to
15 Section 203 as follows:

16 (1) For any initial violation that is intentionally committed, one hundred dollars
17 (\$100) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the
18 employee is underpaid. This amount shall be in addition to an amount
19 sufficient to recover underpaid wages, liquidated damages pursuant to Section
20 1194.2, and any applicable penalties imposed pursuant to Section 203.

21 (2) For each subsequent violation for the same specific offense, two hundred fifty
22 dollars (\$250) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the
23 employee is underpaid regardless of whether the initial violation is
24 intentionally committed. This amount shall be in addition to an amount
25 sufficient to recover underpaid wages, liquidated damages pursuant to Section
26 1194.2, and any applicable penalties imposed pursuant to Section 203.

27 (3) Wages, liquidated damages, and any applicable penalties imposed pursuant to
28 Section 203, recovered pursuant to this section shall be paid to the affected

1 employee.”

2 66. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants caused
3 Aggrieved Employees not to be paid minimum wages as a result of Defendants, without limitation,
4 routinely failing to pay Aggrieved Employees’ minimum wages for all hours worked or otherwise
5 under Defendants’ control due to, without limitation, routinely failing to accurately track and/or pay
6 for all hours actually worked; detrimental rounding or manipulation of time entries; paying straight
7 pay instead of overtime or otherwise failing to pay overtime hours at the proper overtime rate of
8 pay; engaging, suffering, or permitting employees to work off the clock, entitling Plaintiff and other
9 Aggrieved Employees to actual and liquidated damages.

10 67. As a direct and proximate result of the herein-described Labor Code violations,
11 pursuant to Labor Code section 1197.1, Aggrieved Employees are entitled to recover civil penalties
12 for Defendants’ herein-described Labor Code violations in the amount one hundred dollars (\$100)
13 for each Aggrieved Employee per pay period for the initial violation, and two hundred and fifty
14 dollars (\$250) for each Aggrieved Employee per pay period for each subsequent violation.

15 68. Plaintiff does not seek to recover Plaintiff’s 25% share of civil penalties for the
16 particular Labor Code violation(s) that Plaintiff experienced.

17 Civil Penalties Under Labor Code § 2699

18 69. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699, subdivision (a), notwithstanding any other
19 provision of law, any provision of the Labor Code that provides for a civil penalty to be assessed
20 and collected by the LWDA or any of its departments, divisions, commissions, boards, agencies or
21 employees for a violation of the Labor Code may, as an alternative, be recovered through a civil
22 action brought by an aggrieved employee on behalf of himself or herself and other current or former
23 employees pursuant to the procedures specified in Labor Code section 2699.3.

24 70. Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699, subdivision (f), for all provisions of the Labor
25 Code except those for which a civil penalty is specifically provided, the established civil penalty for
26 a violation of those provisions is as follows: if, at the time of the alleged violation, the person
27 employs one or more employees, the civil penalty is one hundred dollars (\$100) for each aggrieved
28 employee per pay period for the initial violation and two hundred dollars (\$200) for each aggrieved

1 employee per pay period for each subsequent violation.

2 71. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges that Defendants, and
3 each of them, violated the Labor Code sections described herein, including, without limitation, for
4 the failure to: pay the rates of pay and overtime rates of pay applicable to their employment,
5 allowances claimed as part of the minimum wage, the regular payday designated by Defendants, the
6 name of the employer, including “doing business as” names used, the name, address, and telephone
7 number of the workers’ compensation insurance carrier, information regarding paid sick leave, and
8 other pertinent information required to be disclosed by Defendants under Labor Code section
9 2810.5, failing to provide Aggrieved Employees with the amount of paid sick leave required to be
10 provided pursuant to California and local laws.

11 72. Moreover, Aggrieved Employees within the State of California are entitled to an
12 award of reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs in connection with their herein-described claims for
13 civil penalties.

14 73. Plaintiff does not seek to recover Plaintiff’s 25% share of civil penalties for the
15 particular Labor Code violation(s) that Plaintiff experienced.

16 **PRAYER**

17 **WHEREFORE**, on behalf of Aggrieved Employees, Plaintiff prays for judgment against
18 Defendants as follows:

- 19 A. An award of civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 210, 226.3, 558,
20 1174.5, 1197.1, and 2699 for all Aggrieved Employees aside from Plaintiff;
21 B. An award of reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code sections
22 210, 226.3, 558, 1174.5, 1197.1, and 2699;
23 C. Pre-judgment and post-judgment interest;
24 D. For costs of suit incurred herein; and

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1 E. Such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.
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4 Dated: May 31, 2024

BIBIYAN LAW GROUP, P.C.

5
6 BY: /s/ Brian Zaghi

7 DAVID D. BIBIYAN

BRIAN ZAGHI

8 Attorneys for Plaintiff CLAUDIA ESTHER
9 VALENZUELA, as an aggrieved employee
10 on behalf of all other aggrieved employees
11 under the Labor Code Private Attorneys'
12 General Act of 2004
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