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Superior Court of California
County of Fresno
By: A. Hoffman, Deputy

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

DONOVAN SOTO, individually, and on
behalf of other members of the general
public similarly situated;

Plaintiff,

v.

PITTMAN FAMILY FARMS, a California
corporation; PITMAN FARMS, a California
corporation; PITMAN FARMS/NEWCO #1,
a California corporation; and DOES 1
through 100, inclusive;

Defendants.

Case No.: [24CECG02898](#)

**CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR
DAMAGES**

- (1) Violation of California Labor Code §§ 510 and 1198 (Unpaid Overtime);
- (2) Violation of California Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512(a) (Unpaid Meal Period Premiums);
- (3) Violation of California Labor Code § 226.7 (Unpaid Rest Period Premiums);
- (4) Violation of California Labor Code §§ 1194 and 1197 (Unpaid Minimum Wages);
- (5) Violation of California Labor Code §§ 201 and 202 (Final Wages Not Timely Paid);
- (6) Violation of California Labor Code § 226(a) (Non-Compliant Wage Statements);
- (7) Violation of California Labor Code §§ 2800 and 2802 (Unreimbursed Business Expenses);
- (8) Violation of California Labor Code §§ 2698, *et seq.* (Private Attorneys General Act of 2004);
- (9) Violation of California Business & Professions Code §§ 17200, *et seq.*

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

COMES NOW, Plaintiff DONOVAN SOTO (“Plaintiff”), individually, and on behalf of other members of the general public similarly situated, and alleges as follows:

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This class action is brought pursuant to the California Code of Civil Procedure section 382. The monetary damages and restitution sought by Plaintiff exceed the minimal jurisdiction limits of the Superior Court and will be established according to proof at trial.

2. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to the California Constitution, Article VI, Section 10, which grants the superior court “original jurisdiction in all other causes” except those given by statute to other courts. The statutes under which this action is brought do not specify any other basis for jurisdiction.

3. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendants because, upon information and belief, Defendants are citizens of California, have sufficient minimum contacts in California, or otherwise intentionally avail themselves of the California market so as to render the exercise of jurisdiction over them by the California courts consistent with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.

4. Venue is proper in this Court because, upon information and belief, Defendants maintain offices, have agents, and/or transact business in the State of California, including the County of Fresno. The majority of the acts and omissions alleged herein relating to Plaintiff took place in the State of California, County of Fresno. Defendants employ Plaintiff within the State of California, County of Fresno.

PARTIES

5. Plaintiff DONOVAN SOTO is an individual residing in the State of California, County of Fresno.

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1 6. Defendant PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, at all times herein mentioned, was and
2 is, upon information and belief, a California corporation headquartered in the State of
3 California, and at all times herein mentioned, was and is, an employer whose employees are
4 engaged throughout the State of California, including the County of Fresno. Defendant
5 PITMAN FARMS, at all times herein mentioned, was and is, upon information and belief, a
6 California corporation headquartered in the State of California, and at all times herein
7 mentioned, was and is, an employer whose employees are engaged throughout the State of
8 California, including the County of Fresno. Defendant PITMAN FARMS/NEWCO #1, at all
9 times herein mentioned, was and is, upon information and belief, a California corporation
10 headquartered in the State of California, and at all times herein mentioned, was and is, an
11 employer whose employees are engaged throughout the State of California, including the
12 County of Fresno.

13 7. At all relevant times, Defendants PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN
14 FARMS, and PITMAN FAMILY/NEWCO #1 were the “employer” of Plaintiff within the
15 meaning of all applicable California laws and statutes.

16 8. At all times herein relevant, Defendants PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN
17 FARMS, PITMAN FAMILY/NEWCO #1, and DOES 1 through 100, and each of them, were
18 the agents, partners, joint venturers, joint employers, representatives, servants, employees,
19 successors-in-interest, co-conspirators and assigns, each of the other, and at all times relevant
20 hereto were acting within the course and scope of their authority as such agents, partners, joint
21 venturers, joint employers, representatives, servants, employees, successors-in-interest, co-
22 conspirators and assigns, and all acts or omissions alleged herein were duly committed with the
23 ratification, knowledge, permission, encouragement, authorization, and consent of each
24 defendant designated herein.

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1 9. The true names and capacities, whether corporate, associate, individual or
2 otherwise, of Defendants DOES 1 through 100, inclusive, are unknown to Plaintiff, who sues
3 said defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based on that
4 information and belief alleges, that each of the Defendants designated as a DOE is legally
5 responsible for the events and happenings referred to in this Complaint, and unlawfully caused
6 the injuries and damages to Plaintiff and the other class members as alleged in this Complaint.
7 Plaintiff will seek leave of court to amend this Complaint to show the true names and
8 capacities when the same have been ascertained.

9 10. Defendants PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN FARMS, PITMAN
10 FAMILY/NEWCO #1, and DOES 1 through 100 will hereinafter collectively be referred to as
11 “Defendants.”

12 11. Plaintiff further alleges that Defendants directly or indirectly controlled or
13 affected the working conditions, wages, working hours, and conditions of employment of
14 Plaintiff and the other class members so as to make each of said Defendants and employers
15 liable under the statutory provisions set forth herein.

16 **CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS**

17 12. Plaintiff brings this action on his own behalf and on behalf of all other members
18 of the general public similarly situated, and, thus, seeks class certification under Code of Civil
19 Procedure section 382.

20 13. The proposed class is defined as follows:

21 All current and former hourly-paid or non-exempt employees of Defendants
22 within the State of California at any time during the period from four years prior
23 to the filing of this Complaint to final judgment.

24 14. Plaintiff reserves the right to establish subclasses as appropriate.

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1 15. The class is ascertainable and there is a well-defined community of interest in
2 the litigation:

3 a. Numerosity: The class members are so numerous that joinder of all class
4 members is impracticable. The membership of the entire class is
5 unknown to Plaintiff at this time; however, the class is estimated to be
6 greater than fifty (50) individuals and the identity of such membership is
7 readily ascertainable by inspection of Defendants' employment records.

8 b. Typicality: Plaintiff's claims are typical of all other class members'
9 claims as demonstrated herein. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately
10 protect the interests of the other class members with whom he has a well-
11 defined community of interest.

12 c. Adequacy: Plaintiff will fairly and adequately protect the interests of
13 each class member, with whom he has a well-defined community of
14 interest and typicality of claims, as demonstrated herein. Plaintiff has no
15 interest that is antagonistic to the other class members. Plaintiff's
16 attorneys, the proposed class counsel, are versed in the rules governing
17 class action discovery, certification, and settlement. Plaintiff has
18 incurred, and during the pendency of this action will continue to incur,
19 costs and attorneys' fees, that have been, are, and will be necessarily
20 expended for the prosecution of this action for the substantial benefit of
21 each class member.

22 d. Superiority: A class action is superior to other available methods for the
23 fair and efficient adjudication of this litigation because individual joinder
24 of all class members is impractical.

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1 e. Public Policy Considerations: Certification of this lawsuit as a class
2 action will advance public policy objectives. Employers of this great
3 state violate employment and labor laws every day. Current employees
4 are often afraid to assert their rights out of fear of direct or indirect
5 retaliation. However, class actions provide the class members who are
6 not named in the complaint anonymity that allows for the vindication of
7 their rights.

8 16. There are common questions of law and fact as to the class members that
9 predominate over questions affecting only individual members. The following common
10 questions of law or fact, among others, exist as to the members of the class:

- 11 a. Whether Defendants' failure to pay wages, without abatement or
12 reduction, in accordance with the California Labor Code, was willful;
- 13 b. Whether Defendants failed to pay their hourly-paid or non-exempt
14 employees within the State of California for all hours worked;
- 15 c. Whether Defendants required Plaintiff and the other class members to
16 work over eight (8) hours per day and/or over forty (40) hours per week
17 and failed to pay the legally required overtime compensation to Plaintiff
18 and the other class members;
- 19 d. Whether Defendants properly calculated the regular rate for Plaintiff and
20 the other class members who worked overtime and earned incentive pay;
- 21 e. Whether Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff and the other class
22 members legally mandated meal and/or rest periods and failed to
23 compensate them the related premium wages pursuant to California
24 Labor Code section 226.7(c);
- 25 f. Whether Defendants failed to pay minimum wages to Plaintiff and the
26 other class members for all hours worked;

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- 1 g. Whether Defendants failed to pay all wages due to class members within
2 the required time upon their discharge or resignation;
- 3 h. Whether Defendants failed to timely pay all wages due to Plaintiff and
4 the other class members during their employment;
- 5 i. Whether Defendants complied with wage reporting as required by the
6 California Labor Code, including, *inter alia*, section 226;
- 7 j. Whether Defendants failed to keep complete or accurate payroll records
8 for Plaintiff and the other class members;
- 9 k. Whether Defendants failed to reimburse Plaintiff and the other class
10 members for necessary business-related expenses and costs;
- 11 l. Whether Defendants' conduct was willful or reckless;
- 12 m. Whether Defendants engaged in unfair business practices in violation of
13 California Business & Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.*;
- 14 n. The appropriate amount of damages, restitution, and/or monetary
15 penalties resulting from Defendants' violation of California law; and
- 16 o. Whether Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to
17 compensatory damages pursuant to the California Labor Code.

18 **GENERAL ALLEGATIONS**

19 17. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants employed Plaintiff
20 and other persons as hourly-paid or non-exempt employees within the State of California,
21 including the County of Fresno.

22 18. Defendants, jointly and severally, employed Plaintiff as an hourly-paid non-
23 exempt employee during the relevant time period in the State of California, County of Fresno.

24 19. Defendants had the authority to hire and terminate Plaintiff and the other class
25 members; to set work rules and conditions governing Plaintiff's and other class members'
26 employment; and to supervise their daily employment activities.

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1 20. Defendants exercised sufficient authority over the terms and conditions of
2 Plaintiff's and other class members' employment for them to be joint employers of Plaintiff
3 and the other class members.

4 21. Defendants directly hired and paid wages and benefits to Plaintiff and the other
5 class members.

6 22. Defendants continue to employ hourly-paid or non-exempt employees within the
7 State of California.

8 23. Plaintiff and the other class members worked over eight (8) hours in a day,
9 and/or forty (40) hours in a week during their employment with Defendants.

10 24. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
11 engaged in a uniform policy and systematic scheme of wage abuse against their hourly-paid or
12 non-exempt employees within the State of California. This scheme involved, *inter alia*, failing
13 to pay them for all hours worked, and failing to provide legally mandated meal and rest breaks
14 or pay related premium wages, in violation of California law.

15 25. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
16 knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive
17 certain wages for overtime compensation and that Plaintiff and the other class members were
18 not receiving wages for overtime compensation.

19 26. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
20 failed to provide Plaintiff and the other class members the required rest and meal periods
21 during the relevant time period as required under the Industrial Welfare Commission ("IWC")
22 Wage Orders and thus they are entitled to any and all applicable penalties.

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1 27. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
2 knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive
3 all timely and complete meal periods or payment of one additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's
4 and the other class members' regular rate of pay when a meal period was missed, late or
5 interrupted, and that Plaintiff and the other class members did not receive all timely and proper
6 meal periods or payment of one additional hour of pay at their regular rate of pay when a meal
7 period was missed.

8 28. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
9 knew or should have known that Plaintiff and other class members were entitled to receive all
10 timely rest periods without interruption or payment of one additional hour of pay at Plaintiff's
11 and the other class members' regular rate of pay when a rest period was missed, late or
12 interrupted, and that Plaintiff and the other class members did not receive all rest periods or
13 payment of one additional hour of pay at their regular rate of pay when a rest period was
14 missed.

15 29. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
16 knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive
17 at least minimum wages for compensation and that Plaintiff and the other class members were
18 not receiving at least minimum wages for all hours worked.

19 30. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
20 knew or should have known that class members were entitled to receive the wages owed to
21 them upon discharge or resignation, including overtime and minimum wages and meal and rest
22 period premiums, and that class members did not, in fact, receive such wages owed to them at
23 the time of their discharge or resignation.

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1 31. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
2 knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive
3 their wages within a specified time period during their employment, and that Plaintiff and the
4 other class members did not, in fact, receive such wages within the specified time period
5 during their employment.

6 32. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
7 knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to receive
8 complete and accurate wage statements in accordance with California law, but, in fact, Plaintiff
9 and the other class members did not receive complete and accurate wage statements from
10 Defendants. The deficiencies included, *inter alia*, the failure to include the total number of
11 hours worked by Plaintiff and the other class members.

12 33. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
13 knew or should have known that they had to keep complete and accurate payroll records for
14 Plaintiff and the other class members in accordance with California law, but, in fact, did not
15 keep complete and accurate payroll records for Plaintiff and the other class members.

16 34. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
17 knew or should have known that Plaintiff and the other class members were entitled to
18 reimbursement for necessary business-related expenses.

19 35. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendants
20 knew or should have known that they had a duty to compensate Plaintiff and the other class
21 members pursuant to California law, and that Defendants had the financial ability to pay such
22 compensation, but willfully, knowingly, and intentionally failed to do so, and falsely
23 represented to Plaintiff and the other class members that they were properly denied wages, all
24 in order to increase Defendants' profits.

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1 36. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to pay
2 overtime wages to Plaintiff and the other class members for all hours worked. Plaintiff and
3 other class members were required to work more than eight (8) hours per day and/or forty (40)
4 hours per week without overtime compensation.

5 37. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to provide the
6 requisite uninterrupted and timely meal and rest periods to Plaintiff and the other class
7 members and failed to compensate them the related premium wages.

8 38. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to pay
9 Plaintiff and the other class members at least minimum wages for all hours worked.

10 39. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to pay class
11 members the wages owed to them upon discharge or resignation.

12 40. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to pay
13 Plaintiff and the other class members wages within a specified time period during their
14 employment.

15 41. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to provide
16 complete or accurate wage statements to Plaintiff and the other class members.

17 42. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to keep
18 complete or accurate payroll records for Plaintiff and the other class members.

19 43. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to reimburse
20 Plaintiff and the other class members for necessary business-related expenses.

21 44. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to properly
22 compensate Plaintiff and the other class members pursuant to California law in order to
23 increase Defendants' profits.

24 45. California Labor Code section 218 states that nothing in Article 1 of the Labor
25 Code shall limit the right of any wage claimant to "sue directly . . . for any wages or penalty
26 due to him [or her] under this article."

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1 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **(Violation of California Labor Code §§ 510 and 1198)**

3 **(Against PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN FARMS, PITMAN FARMS/NEWCO #1,**
4 **and DOES 1 through 100)**

5 46. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in Paragraphs 1
6 through 45, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set
7 forth herein.

8 47. California Labor Code section 1198 and the applicable IWC Wage Order
9 provide that it is unlawful to employ persons without compensating them at a rate of pay either
10 time-and-one-half or two-times that person's regular rate of pay, depending on the number of
11 hours worked by the person on a daily or weekly basis.

12 48. Specifically, the applicable IWC Wage Order provides that Defendants are and
13 were required to pay Plaintiff and the other class members employed by Defendants, who
14 work(ed) more than eight (8) hours in a day or more than forty (40) hours in a workweek, at
15 the rate of time-and-one-half for all hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a day or more
16 than forty (40) hours in a workweek.

17 49. The applicable IWC Wage Order further provides that Defendants are and were
18 required to pay Plaintiff and the other class members overtime compensation at a rate of two
19 times their regular rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of twelve (12) hours in a day.

20 50. California Labor Code section 510 codifies the right to overtime compensation
21 at one-and-one-half times the regular hourly rate for hours worked in excess of eight (8) hours
22 in a day or forty (40) hours in a week or for the first eight (8) hours worked on the seventh day
23 of work, and overtime compensation at twice the regular hourly rate for hours worked in
24 excess of twelve (12) hours in a day or in excess of eight (8) hours in a day on the seventh day
25 of work.

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51. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Plaintiff and the other class members worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a day, and/or in excess of forty (40) hours in a week.

52. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants intentionally and willfully failed to pay overtime wages owed to Plaintiff and the other class members.

53. Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff and the other class members the unpaid balance of overtime compensation, as required by California laws, violates the provisions of California Labor Code sections 510 and 1198, and is therefore unlawful.

54. Pursuant to California Labor Code section 1194, Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to recover unpaid overtime compensation, as well as interest, costs, and attorneys' fees.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of California Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512(a))

**(Against PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN FARMS, PITMAN FARMS/NEWCO #1,
and DOES 1 through 100)**

55. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 54, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

56. During the relevant time period set forth herein, the IWC Wage Order and California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512(a) were applicable to Plaintiff's and the other class members' employment by Defendants.

57. During the relevant time period set forth herein, California Labor Code section 226.7 provides that no employer shall require an employee to work during any meal or rest period mandated by an applicable order of the California IWC.

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1 58. During the relevant time period set forth herein, the applicable IWC Wage
2 Order and California Labor Code section 512(a) provide that an employer may not require,
3 cause or permit an employee to work for a work period of more than five (5) hours per day
4 without providing the employee with a meal period of not less than thirty (30) minutes, except
5 that if the total work period per day of the employee is no more than six (6) hours, the meal
6 period may be waived by mutual consent of both the employer and employee.

7 59. During the relevant time period set forth herein, the applicable IWC Wage
8 Order and California Labor Code section 512(a) further provide that an employer may not
9 require, cause, or permit an employee to work for a work period of more than ten (10) hours
10 per day without providing the employee with a second uninterrupted meal period of not less
11 than thirty (30) minutes, except that if the total hours worked is no more than twelve (12)
12 hours, the second meal period may be waived by mutual consent of the employer and the
13 employee only if the first meal period was not waived.

14 60. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Plaintiff and the other class
15 members who were scheduled to work for a period of time no longer than six (6) hours, and
16 who did not waive their legally-mandated meal periods by mutual consent, were required to
17 work for periods longer than five (5) hours without an uninterrupted meal period of not less
18 than thirty (30) minutes and/or without a rest period.

19 61. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Plaintiff and the other class
20 members who were scheduled to work for a period of time no longer than twelve (12) hours,
21 and who did not waive their legally-mandated meal periods by mutual consent, were required
22 to work for periods longer than ten (10) hours without an uninterrupted meal period of not less
23 than thirty (30) minutes and/or without a rest period.

24 62. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Plaintiff and the other class
25 members who were scheduled to work for a period of time in excess of six (6) hours were
26 required to work for periods longer than five (5) hours without an uninterrupted meal period of
27 not less than thirty (30) minutes and/or without a rest period.
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63. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Plaintiff and the other class members who were scheduled to work for a period of time in excess of twelve (12) hours were required to work for periods longer than ten (10) hours without an uninterrupted meal period of not less than thirty (30) minutes and/or without a rest period.

64. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants intentionally and willfully required Plaintiff and the other class members to work during meal periods and failed to compensate Plaintiff and the other class members the full meal period premium for work performed during meal periods.

65. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the other class members the full meal period premium due pursuant to California Labor Code section 226.7.

66. Defendants' conduct violates the applicable IWC Wage Order and California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512(a).

67. Pursuant to the applicable IWC Wage Order and California Labor Code section 226.7(c), Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to recover from Defendants one additional hour of pay at the employee's regular rate of compensation for each workday that the meal period was not provided.

THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of California Labor Code § 226.7)

**(Against PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN FARMS, PITMAN FARMS/NEWCO #1,
and DOES 1 through 100)**

68. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 67, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

69. During the relevant time period set forth herein, the applicable IWC Wage Order and California Labor Code section 226.7 were applicable to Plaintiff's and the other class members' employment by Defendants.

1 70. During the relevant time period set forth herein, California Labor Code section
2 226.7 provides that no employer shall require an employee to work during any rest period
3 mandated by an applicable order of the California IWC.

4 71. During the relevant time period set forth herein, the applicable IWC Wage
5 Order provides that “[e]very employer shall authorize and permit all employees to take rest
6 periods, which insofar as practicable shall be in the middle of each work period” and that the
7 “rest period time shall be based on the total hours worked daily at the rate of ten (10) minutes
8 net rest time per four (4) hours or major fraction thereof” unless the total daily work time is
9 less than three and one-half (3 ½) hours.

10 72. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants required Plaintiff
11 and the other class members to work four (4) or more hours without authorizing or permitting a
12 ten (10) minute rest period per each four (4) hour period worked.

13 73. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants willfully required
14 Plaintiff and the other class members to work during rest periods and failed to pay Plaintiff and
15 the other class members the full rest period premium for work performed during rest periods.

16 74. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to pay
17 Plaintiff and the other class members the full rest period premium due pursuant to California
18 Labor Code section 226.7.

19 75. Defendants’ conduct violates applicable IWC Wage Orders and California
20 Labor Code section 226.7.

21 76. Pursuant to the applicable IWC Wage Orders and California Labor Code section
22 226.7(c), Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to recover from Defendants one
23 additional hour of pay at the employees’ regular hourly rate of compensation for each workday
24 that the rest period was not provided.

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1 **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **(Violation of California Labor Code §§ 1194 and 1197)**

3 **(Against PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN FARMS, PITMAN FARMS/NEWCO #1,**
4 **and DOES 1 through 100)**

5 77. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1
6 through 76 and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set
7 forth herein.

8 78. During the relevant time period set forth herein, California Labor Code sections
9 1194 and 1197 provide that the minimum wage to be paid to employees, and the payment of a
10 lesser wage than the minimum so fixed, is unlawful.

11 79. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants failed to pay
12 minimum wages to Plaintiff and the other class members as required, pursuant to California
13 Labor Code sections 1194 and 1197.

14 80. Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff and the other class members the minimum
15 wage as required violates California Labor Code sections 1194 and 1197. Pursuant to those
16 sections, Plaintiff and other class members are entitled to recover the unpaid balance of their
17 minimum wage compensation as well as interest, costs, and attorneys' fees, and liquidated
18 damages in an amount equal to the wages unlawfully unpaid and interest thereon.

19 81. Pursuant to California Labor Code section 1194.2, Plaintiff and the other class
20 members are entitled to recover liquidated damages in an amount equal to the wages
21 unlawfully unpaid and interest thereon.

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1 **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **(Violation of California Labor Code §§ 201 and 202)**

3 **(Against PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN FARMS, PITMAN FARMS/NEWCO #1,**
4 **and DOES 1 through 100)**

5 82. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1
6 through 81, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set
7 forth herein.

8 83. During the relevant time period set forth herein, California Labor Code sections
9 201 and 202 provide that if an employer discharges an employee, the wages earned and unpaid
10 at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately, and if an employee quits their
11 employment, their wages shall become due and payable not later than seventy-two (72) hours
12 thereafter, unless the employee has given seventy-two (72) hours' notice of their intention to
13 quit, in which case the employee is entitled to their wages at the time of quitting.

14 84. During the relevant time period set forth herein, Defendants intentionally and
15 willfully failed to pay class members who are no longer employed by Defendants their wages,
16 earned and unpaid, within seventy-two (72) hours of their leaving Defendants' employ.

17 85. Defendants' failure to pay class members who are no longer employed by
18 Defendants their wages, earned and unpaid, within seventy-two (72) hours of their leaving
19 Defendants' employ, is in violation of California Labor Code sections 201 and 202.

20 86. California Labor Code section 203 provides that if an employer willfully fails to
21 pay wages owed, in accordance with sections 201 and 202, then the wages of the employee
22 shall continue as a penalty from the due date thereof at the same rate until paid or until an
23 action is commenced; but the wages shall not continue for more than thirty (30) days.

24 87. Class members are entitled to recover from Defendants the statutory penalty
25 wages for each day they were not paid, up to the thirty (30) day maximum as provided by
26 Labor Code section 203.

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1 **SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **(Violation of California Labor Code § 226(a))**

3 **(Against PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN FARMS, PITMAN FARMS/NEWCO #1,**
4 **and DOES 1 through 100)**

5 88. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1
6 through 87, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set
7 forth herein.

8 89. During the relevant time period set forth herein, California Labor Code section
9 226(a) provides that every employer shall furnish each of their employees an accurate itemized
10 statement in writing showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee,
11 (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid
12 on a piece-rate basis, (4) all deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of
13 the employee may be aggregated and shown as one item, (5) net wages earned, (6) the
14 inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and
15 only the last four digits of their social security number or an employee identification number
16 other than a social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the
17 employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the
18 corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee. The deductions
19 made from payment of wages shall be recorded in ink or other indelible form, properly dated,
20 showing the month, day, and year, and a copy of the statement and the record of the deductions
21 shall be kept on file by the employer for at least three years at the place of employment or at a
22 central location within the State of California.

23 90. Defendants have intentionally and willfully failed to provide Plaintiff and the
24 other class members with complete and accurate wage statements. The deficiencies include but
25 are not limited to: the failure to include the total number of hours worked by Plaintiff and other
26 class members.

27 *///*

91. As a result of Defendants' violation of California Labor Code section 226(a), Plaintiff and the other class members have suffered injury and damage to their statutorily protected rights.

92. More specifically, Plaintiff and the other class members have been injured by Defendants' intentional and willful violation of California Labor Code section 226(a) because they were denied both their legal right to receive, and their protected interest in receiving, accurate and itemized wage statements pursuant to California Labor Code section 226(a).

93. Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to recover from Defendants the greater of their actual damages caused by Defendants' failure to comply with California Labor Code section 226(a), or an aggregate penalty not exceeding four thousand dollars per employee.

94. Plaintiff and the other class members are also entitled to injunctive relief to ensure compliance with this section, pursuant to California Labor Code section 226(h).

SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of California Labor Code §§ 2800 and 2802)

**(Against PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN FARMS, PITMAN FARMS/NEWCO #1,
and DOES 1 through 100)**

95. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 94, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

96. Pursuant to California Labor Code sections 2800 and 2802, an employer must reimburse its employee for all necessary expenditures incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the discharge of their job duties or in direct consequence of their obedience to the directions of the employer.

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97. Defendants have intentionally and willfully failed to reimburse Plaintiff and the other class members for all necessary business-related expenses and costs. Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to recover from Defendants their business-related expenses and costs incurred during the course and scope of their employment, plus interest accrued from the date on which the employee incurred the necessary expenditures at the same rate as judgments in civil actions in the State of California.

EIGHTH CAUSE OF ACTION

(Violation of Labor Code §§ 2698, *et seq.* (“PAGA”))

**(Against PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN FARMS, PITMAN FARMS/NEWCO #1,
and DOES 1 through 100)**

98. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 97, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set forth herein.

99. The Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 (“PAGA”) expressly establishes that any provision of the California Labor Code which provides for a civil penalty to be assessed and collected by the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”), or any of its departments, divisions, commissions, boards, agencies or employees for a violation of the California Labor Code, may be recovered through a civil action brought by an aggrieved employee on behalf of themselves, and other current or former employees.

100. On April 30, 2024, Plaintiff provided written notice to the LWDA and Defendants of the specific provisions of the Labor Code he contends were violated, and the theories supporting his contentions. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 1** and incorporated by reference is a copy of the written notice to the LWDA. Plaintiff believes that on or about July 5, 2024, the sixty-five (65) days' notice period expired as to all Defendants, and the LWDA did not take any action to investigate or prosecute this matter. Therefore, Plaintiff exhausted his administrative remedies.

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1 101. Plaintiff and the other non-exempt employees are “aggrieved employees” as
2 defined by California Labor Code section 2699(c) in that they all are or were non-exempt
3 employees of Defendants employed in California at any time during the period from April 30,
4 2023, to the present, and one or more of the alleged violations was committed against them.

5 **Failure to Pay Minimum and Overtime Wages**

6 102. At all times relevant herein, Defendants were required to compensate their non-
7 exempt employees minimum wages for all hours worked and overtime wages for all hours
8 worked in excess of eight (8) hours in a day or forty (40) hours in a workweek, pursuant to the
9 mandate of Labor Code sections 510, 1194, 1197, and 1198.

10 103. As a policy and practice, Defendants failed to compensate Plaintiff and the other
11 aggrieved current and former employees for all hours worked, resulting in a failure to pay all
12 minimum wages and overtime wages, where applicable.

13 **Failure to Provide Meal Periods and Rest Breaks**

14 104. At all times relevant herein, Defendants were required to authorize and permit
15 their non-exempt employees to take a 10-minute rest break for every four (4) hours worked or
16 major fraction thereof and were further required to provide their non-exempt employees with a
17 30-minute meal period for every five (5) hours worked, pursuant to the mandates of Labor
18 Code sections 226.7 and 512(a).

19 105. As a policy and practice, Defendants failed to provide Plaintiff and the other
20 aggrieved current and former employees with legally mandated meal periods and rest breaks
21 and failed to pay proper compensation for this failure.

22 **Failure to Timely Pay Wages During Employment**

23 106. At all times relevant herein, Defendants were required to pay their employees
24 within a specified time period pursuant to the mandate of Labor Code section 204.

25 107. As a policy and practice, Defendants failed to pay Plaintiff and the other
26 aggrieved current and former employees all wages due and owing within the required time
27 period.
28

1 **Failure to Timely Pay Wages Upon Termination**

2 108. At all times relevant herein, Defendants were required to pay their employees all
3 wages owed in a timely fashion at the end of employment pursuant to the mandates of Labor
4 Code sections 201 and 202.

5 109. As a policy and practice, as a result of Defendants' Labor Code violations
6 alleged above, Defendants failed to pay aggrieved former employees their final wages,
7 pursuant to the mandates of Labor Code sections 201 and 202. Accordingly, Defendants owe
8 waiting time penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 203.

9 **Failure to Provide Complete and Accurate Wage Statements**

10 110. At all times relevant herein, Defendants were required to keep *accurate* records
11 regarding their California employees, pursuant to the mandates of Labor Code sections 226 and
12 1174.

13 111. As a result of Defendants' various Labor Code violations, Defendants failed to
14 keep accurate records regarding Plaintiff and the other aggrieved current and former employees.
15 For example, Defendants failed in their affirmative obligation to keep accurate records regarding
16 Plaintiff and the other aggrieved current and former employees' gross wages earned, total hours
17 worked, all deductions, net wages earned, and all applicable hourly rates and the number of
18 hours worked at each hourly rate.

19 **Failure to Reimburse Business Expenses**

20 112. At all times relevant herein, Defendants were required to reimburse their
21 employees for any and all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employees in direct
22 consequences of the discharge of their duties, pursuant to the mandates of Labor Code sections
23 2800 and 2802.

24 113. As a policy and practice, Defendants regularly failed to reimburse Plaintiff and
25 the other aggrieved current and former employees for all business expenses incurred and owed
26 to them within the required time period.

27 ///

Penalties

114. Pursuant to California Labor Code section 2699, Plaintiff, individually, and on behalf of other current and former aggrieved employees, requests and is entitled to recover from Defendants, and each of them, civil penalties, interest, attorneys' fees and costs pursuant, including but not limited to:

- a. Penalties under California Labor Code section 2699 in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial violation, and two hundred dollars (\$200) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent violation;
- b. Penalties under California Code of Regulations Title 8 section 11040 in the amount of 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;
- c. Penalties under California Labor Code section 210 in addition to, and entirely independent and apart from, any other penalty provided in the California Labor Code in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial violation, and two hundred dollars (\$200) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent violation;
- d. Penalties under Labor Code section 1197.1 in the amount of a hundred dollars (\$100) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for the initial violation, and two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) for each aggrieved employee per pay period for each subsequent violation;
- e. Any and all additional penalties as provided by the Labor Code and/or other statutes; and
- f. Attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to Labor Code sections 218.5, 1194, and 2699, and any other applicable statute.

1 **NINTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **(Violation of California Business & Professions Code §§ 17200, *et seq.*)**

3 **(Against PITMAN FAMILY FARMS, PITMAN FARMS, PITMAN FARMS/NEWCO #1,**
4 **and DOES 1 through 100)**

5 115. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1
6 through 114, and each and every part thereof with the same force and effect as though fully set
7 forth herein.

8 116. Defendants' conduct, as alleged herein, has been, and continues to be unfair,
9 unlawful and harmful to Plaintiff, the other class members, to the general public, and
10 Defendants' competitors. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks to enforce important rights affecting the
11 public interest within the meaning of Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5.

12 117. Defendants' activities as alleged herein are violations of California law, and
13 constitute unlawful business acts and practices in violation of California Business &
14 Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.*

15 118. A violation of California Business & Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.*
16 may be predicated on the violation of any state or federal law. In this instant case, Defendants'
17 policy and practice of requiring Plaintiff and the other class members to work overtime hours
18 without paying them proper compensation violate California Labor Code sections 510 and
19 1198. Additionally, Defendants' policy and practice of requiring Plaintiff and the other class
20 members to work through their meal and rest periods without paying them proper
21 compensation violate California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512(a). Moreover, Defendants'
22 policy and practice of failing to timely pay wages to class members violate California Labor
23 Code sections 201 and 202. Defendants also violated California Labor Code sections 226(a),
24 1194, 1197, 2800 and 2802.

25 119. As a result of the herein described violations of California law, Defendants
26 unlawfully gained an unfair advantage over other businesses.

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1 120. Plaintiff and the other class members have been personally injured by
2 Defendants' unlawful business acts and practices as alleged herein, including but not
3 necessarily limited to the loss of money and/or property.

4 121. Pursuant to California Business & Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.*,
5 Plaintiff and the other class members are entitled to restitution of the wages withheld and
6 retained by Defendants during a period that commences four years prior to the filing of this
7 Complaint; an award of attorneys' fees pursuant to California Code of Civil procedure section
8 1021.5 and other applicable laws; and an award of costs.

9 **DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

10 Plaintiff, individually, and on behalf of other members of the general public similarly
11 situated, requests a trial by jury.

12 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

13 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, individually and on behalf of all other members of the general
14 public similarly situated, prays for relief and judgment against Defendants, jointly and
15 severally, as follows:

16 **Class Certification**

- 17 1. That this action be certified as a class action;
18 2. That Plaintiff be appointed as representative of the Class;
19 3. That counsel for Plaintiff be appointed as Class Counsel; and
20 4. That Defendants provide to Class Counsel immediately the names and most
21 current contact information (address, e-mail and telephone numbers) of all class members.

22 **As to the First Cause of Action**

- 23 5. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California
24 Labor Code sections 510 and 1198 and applicable IWC Wage Orders by willfully failing to pay
25 all overtime wages due to Plaintiff and the other class members;

- 26 6. For general unpaid wages at overtime wage rates and such general and special
27 damages as may be appropriate;
28

1 7. For pre-judgment interest on any unpaid overtime compensation commencing
2 from the date such amounts were due;

3 8. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit incurred herein pursuant to
4 California Labor Code section 1194; and

5 9. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

6 **As to the Second Cause of Action**

7 10. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California
8 Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512(a) and applicable IWC Wage Orders by willfully failing to
9 provide all meal periods (including second meal periods) to Plaintiff and the other class
10 members;

11 11. That the Court make an award to Plaintiff and the other class members of one
12 (1) hour of pay at each employee's regular rate of compensation for each workday that a meal
13 period was not provided;

14 12. For all actual, consequential, and incidental losses and damages, according to
15 proof;

16 13. For premium wages pursuant to California Labor Code section 226.7(c);

17 14. For pre-judgment interest on any unpaid wages from the date such amounts
18 were due;

19 15. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit incurred herein; and

20 16. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

21 **As to the Third Cause of Action**

22 17. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California
23 Labor Code section 226.7 and applicable IWC Wage Orders by willfully failing to provide all
24 rest periods to Plaintiff and the other class members;

25 18. That the Court make an award to Plaintiff and the other class members of one
26 (1) hour of pay at each employee's regular rate of compensation for each workday that a rest
27 period was not provided;

1 19. For all actual, consequential, and incidental losses and damages, according to
2 proof;

3 20. For premium wages pursuant to California Labor Code section 226.7(c);

4 21. For pre-judgment interest on any unpaid wages from the date such amounts
5 were due; and

6 22. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

7 **As to the Fourth Cause of Action**

8 23. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California
9 Labor Code sections 1194 and 1197 by willfully failing to pay minimum wages to Plaintiff and
10 the other class members;

11 24. For general unpaid wages and such general and special damages as may be
12 appropriate;

13 25. For pre-judgment interest on any unpaid compensation from the date such
14 amounts were due;

15 26. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit incurred herein pursuant to
16 California Labor Code section 1194(a);

17 27. For liquidated damages pursuant to California Labor Code section 1194.2; and

18 28. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

19 **As to the Fifth Cause of Action**

20 29. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California
21 Labor Code sections 201, 202, and 203 by willfully failing to pay all compensation owed at the
22 time of termination of the employment of class members no longer employed by Defendants;

23 30. For all actual, consequential, and incidental losses and damages, according to
24 proof;

25 31. For statutory wage penalties pursuant to California Labor Code section 203 for
26 the class members who have left Defendants' employ;

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32. For pre-judgment interest on any unpaid compensation from the date such amounts were due; and

33. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

As to the Sixth Cause of Action

34. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated the record keeping provisions of California Labor Code section 226(a) and applicable IWC Wage Orders as to Plaintiff and the other class members, and willfully failed to provide accurate itemized wage statements thereto;

35. For actual, consequential and incidental losses and damages, according to proof;

36. For statutory penalties pursuant to California Labor Code section 226(e);

37. For injunctive relief to ensure compliance with this section, pursuant to California Labor Code section 226(h); and

38. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

As to the Seventh Cause of Action

39. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California Labor Code sections 2800 and 2802 by willfully failing to reimburse Plaintiff and the other class members for all necessary business-related expenses as required by California Labor Code sections 2800 and 2802;

40. For actual, consequential and incidental losses and damages, according to proof;

41. For the imposition of civil penalties and/or statutory penalties;

42. For punitive damages and/or exemplary damages according to proof at trial;

43. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit incurred herein; and

44. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

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46. For civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 2699 *et seq.*, for Defendants' violations of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 432.5, 510, 512(a), 551, 552, 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802;

48. For such other and further relief that the court may deem just and proper.

49. That the Court declare, adjudge and decree that Defendants violated California Business and Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.* by failing to provide Plaintiff and the other class members all overtime compensation due to them, failing to provide all meal and rest periods to Plaintiff and the other class members, failing to pay at least minimum wages to Plaintiff and the other class members, and failing to pay class members' wages timely as required by California Labor Code sections 201 and 202.

51. For the appointment of a receiver to receive, manage and distribute any and all funds disgorged from Defendants and determined to have been wrongfully acquired by Defendants as a result of violation of California Business and Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.*;

52. For reasonable attorneys' fees and costs of suit incurred herein pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure section 1021.5;

1 53. For injunctive relief to ensure compliance with this section, pursuant to
2 California Business and Professions Code sections 17200, *et seq.*; and

3 54. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem just and proper.
4

5 Dated: July 8, 2024

JUSTICE LAW CORPORATION

6
7 By:  _____

8 Douglas Han
9 Shunt Tatavos-Gharajeh
10 Talia Lux
11 *Attorneys for Plaintiff*
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EXHIBIT 1

April 30, 2024

BY U.S. MAIL/ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

PAGAfilings@dir.ca.gov
State of California
Labor & Workforce Development Agency
800 Capitol Mall, MIC-55
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Pitman Family Farms, Pitman Farms, and Pitman Farms/Newco #1

Dear Representative:

We have been retained to represent Donovan Soto against Pitman Family Farms, Pitman Farms, and Pitman Farms/Newco #1 (including any and all affiliates, managers, members, subsidiaries, and parents, and their shareholders, officers, directors, and employees), any individual, owner, officer or managing agent acting on behalf of an "Employer" pursuant to California Labor Code section 558.1, and DOES 1-20¹ for violations of California wage-and-hour laws (hereinafter referred to as "Pitman Family Farms").

Mr. Soto is pursuing his California Labor Code sections 2698, *et seq.*, the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 ("PAGA") claim on a representative basis. Therefore, Mr. Soto may seek penalties for violations of the Labor Code on behalf of the State of California and aggrieved employees, which are recoverable under PAGA. This letter is sent in compliance with the reporting requirements of California Labor Code section 2699.3.

Pitman Family Farms is a California corporation located at 1075 North Ave Sanger, CA 93657. Pitman Farms is a California corporation located at 1075 North Ave Sanger, CA 93657. Pitman Farms/Newco #1 is a California corporation located at 1075 North Ave Sanger, CA 93657.

Pitman Family Farms employed Mr. Soto as an hourly-paid, non-exempt Production Associate within one year of the date of this letter (until in or around April of 2024) in the State of California. Pitman Family Farms directly controls the wages, hours and/or working conditions of Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees' employment, including direction, retention, scheduling, supervision, and termination.

¹ Mr. Soto does not know the true names or capacities, whether individual, partner or corporate, of DOES 1 through 20, inclusive, and for that reason, said DOES are designated under such fictitious names. Mr. Soto will amend this notice when the true names and capacities are known. Mr. Soto is informed and believes that each DOE was responsible in some way for the matters alleged herein and proximately caused Mr. Soto and other current and former aggrieved employees to be subject to the illegal employment practices, wrongs and injuries complained of herein.

The “aggrieved employees” that Mr. Soto may seek penalties on behalf of are all current and former hourly-paid or non-exempt employees (whether hired directly or through a staffing agency) of Pitman Family Farms.

Pitman Family Farms failed to properly pay its hourly-paid or non-exempt employees for all hours worked, failed to properly compensate minimum and overtime wages, failed to properly provide legally mandated meal and rest breaks or pay premium wages in lieu thereof, failed to issue compliant wage statements, and failed to reimburse for all necessary business-related costs and expenses, thus resulting in Labor Code violations as stated below.

Pursuant to *Huff v. Securitas Security Services USA, Inc.* (2018) 23 Cal. App. 5th 745, 751, an employee who brings a representative action and was affected by at least one of the violations alleged in the complaint has standing to pursue penalties on behalf of the state not only for that violation, but for violations affecting other employees as well. Accordingly, Mr. Soto has standing to pursue penalties on behalf of the state for violations affecting all aggrieved employees at Pitman Family Farms, regardless of their classification, job title, location, or whether they were hired directly or through a staffing agency.

Pitman Family Farms has violated and/or continues to violate, among other provisions of the California Labor Code and applicable wage law, California Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 432.5, 510, 512(a), 551, 552, 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802, and the IWC Wage Orders.

California Labor Code sections 510, 1194, and 1198 require employers to pay time-and-a-half or double-time overtime wages and make it unlawful to work employees for hours longer than eight hours in one day and/or over forty hours in one week without paying the premium overtime rates. During the relevant time period, Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees routinely worked in excess of 8 hours in a day and 40 hours in a week. Pitman Family Farms failed to compensate Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees for all hours worked and performing off-the-clock work, including pre- and post-shift, and during meal breaks. Pitman Family Farms also failed to include non-discretionary bonuses into aggrieved employees’ regular rate of pay for purposes of overtime compensation. Therefore, Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees were entitled to receive certain wages for overtime compensation, but they were not paid for all overtime hours worked.

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California Labor Code section 246 requires that employers provide employees with paid sick leave of not less than one hour per every 30 hours worked. California Labor Code section 246(l) also requires that paid sick leave be paid at a non-exempt employee's regular rate of pay for the workweek in which the employee uses paid sick time or at a rate calculated by dividing the employee's total wages, not including overtime premium pay, by the employee's total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90 days of employment. During the relevant time period, Pitman Family Farms failed to pay aggrieved employees paid sick leave that complied with California Labor Code section 246, by, for example, failing to pay paid sick leave at a non-exempt employee's regular rate of pay or at a rate calculated by dividing the employee's total wages, not including overtime premium pay, by the employee's total hours worked in the full pay periods of the prior 90 days of employment.

California Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512(a) require employers to pay an employee one additional hour of pay at the employee's regular rate for each workday that a meal or rest break is not provided. During the relevant time period, Pitman Family Farms routinely required Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees to work through, interrupt, cut short, and/or delay their meal and rest breaks to comply with Pitman Family Farms' policies and expectations and prepare orders. Pitman Family Farms failed to provide coverage to Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees so they may be relieved of all work duties and take legally mandated meal and rest breaks. Lastly, Pitman Family Farms failed to authorize and permit aggrieved employees to take the requisite number of meal and rest breaks, including second meal breaks and third rest breaks, when working shifts exceeding 10 hours in length. Despite these facts, Pitman Family Farms failed to compensate Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees all the premium wages they were owed, including failing to pay premium wages at aggrieved employees' regular rate of pay.

California Labor Code section 551 states "[e]very person employed in any occupation of labor is entitled to one day's rest therefrom in seven." Section 552 further states "[n]o employer of labor shall cause his employees to work more than six days in seven." Pitman Family Farms required aggrieved employees to work seven days in a row or more without one day's rest.

California Labor Code section 432.5 states "[n]o employer, or agent, manager, superintendent, or officer thereof, shall require any employee or applicant for employment to agree, in writing, to any term or condition which is known by such employer, or agent, manager, superintendent, or officer thereof to be prohibited by law." Pitman Family Farms required aggrieved employees to execute arbitration agreements as a condition of employment despite knowing that such agreements are prohibited under Labor Code section 432.6.

California Labor Code section 201 requires that if an employer discharges an employee, the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately. California Labor Code section 202 requires that if an employee not having a written contract for a definite period quits their employment, their wages shall become due and payable not later than 72 hours thereafter, unless the employee has given 72 hours' previous notice of their intention to quit, in which case the employee is entitled to their wages at the time of quitting. California Labor Code section 203 provides that if an employer willfully fails to pay, without abatement or reduction, in accordance with Labor Code sections 201, 201.3, 201.5, 201.6, 201.8, 201.9, 202, and 205.5, any wages of an employee who is discharged or who quits, the wages of the employee shall continue as a penalty from the due date thereof at the same rate until paid or until an action therefor is commenced; but the wages shall not continue for more than 30 days. During the relevant time period, Pitman Family Farms failed to pay Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees all wages, including for uncompensated off-the-clock work, unpaid overtime premiums and premium wages for failing to provide legally mandated meal and rest breaks, due to them within any time period specified by California Labor Code sections 201 and 202 and therefore is liable under California Labor Code sections 203 and 210.

California Labor Code section 204 requires that all wages earned by any person in any employment between the 1st and the 15th days, inclusive, of any calendar month, other than those wages due upon termination of an employee, are due and payable between the 16th and the 26th day of the month during which the labor was performed, and that all wages earned by any person in any employment between the 16th and the last day, inclusive, of any calendar month, other than those wages due upon termination of an employee, are due and payable between the 1st and the 10th day of the following month. California Labor Code section 204 also requires that all wages earned for labor in excess of the normal work period shall be paid no later than the payday for the next regular payroll period. During the relevant time period, Pitman Family Farms failed to pay Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees all wages due to them, including for uncompensated off-the-clock work, unpaid overtime premiums and premium wages for failing to provide legally mandated meal and rest breaks within any time period specified by California Labor Code section 204, and is therefore liable under California Labor Code section 210.

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California Labor Code section 226 requires employers to make, keep and provide complete and accurate itemized wage statements to their employees. During the relevant time period, Pitman Family Farms did not provide Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees with complete and accurate itemized wage statements. The wage statements they received from Pitman Family Farms were in violation of California Labor Code section 226(a). The violations include, but are not limited to, the failure to include (1) gross wages earned by Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees, (2) total hours worked by Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate by aggrieved employees, (4) all deductions for Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees, (5) net wages earned by Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which aggrieved employees are paid, (7) the name of the aggrieved employee and only the last four digits of their social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by aggrieved employees.

California Labor Code section 558 allows recovery of penalties. Pursuant to the code, (a) Any employer or other person acting on behalf of an employer who violates, or causes to be violated, a section of this chapter or any provision regulating hours and days of work in any order 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 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. Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees have been denied their wages and premium wages and, therefore, are entitled to penalties.

California Labor Code section 1174(d) requires an employer to keep, 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 any applicable piece rate paid to, employees employed at the respective plants or establishments. These records shall be kept with rules established for this purpose by the commission, but in any case, shall be kept on file for not less than three years. During the relevant time period, Pitman Family Farms failed to keep accurate and complete payroll records showing the hours worked daily and the wages paid to Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees.

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California Labor Code sections 1194, 1197 and 1197.1 provide the minimum wage to be paid to employees, and the payment of a lesser wage than the minimum so fixed is unlawful. During the relevant time period, Pitman Family Farms did not provide Mr. Soto and other aggrieved employees with the minimum wages to which they were entitled despite constructive and actual knowledge of off-the-clock work, including pre- and post-shift, and during meal breaks.

California Labor Code sections 2800 and 2802 require an employer to reimburse its employee for all necessary expenditures incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the discharge of their job duties or in direct consequence of their obedience to the directions of the employer. During their employment, aggrieved employees incurred necessary business-related expenses and costs that were not fully reimbursed by Pitman Family Farms.

We believe that Mr. Soto and other current and former California-based hourly-paid or non-exempt employees are entitled to penalties as allowed under California Labor Code sections 2698, *et seq.* for violations of Labor Code sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 210, 218.5, 221, 226(a), 226.3, 226.7, 246, 432.5, 510, 512(a), 551, 552, 558, 1174(d), 1194, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2800 and 2802, and the IWC Wage Orders.

California Labor Code section 2699.3 requires that a claimant send a certified letter to the employer in question and the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency setting forth the claims, and the basis for the claims, thereby giving the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency an opportunity to investigate the claims and/or take any action it deems appropriate.

The purpose of this letter is to satisfy the requirement created by California Labor Code section 2699 prior to seeking penalties allowed by law for the aforementioned statutory violations. We look forward to determining whether the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency intends to take any action in reference to these claims. We kindly request that you respond to this notice according to the time frame contemplated by the California Labor Code.

Mr. Soto will seek these penalties on his own behalf and on behalf of other similarly situated California-based hourly-paid or non-exempt employees of Pitman Family Farms within one year of the date of this letter, as allowed by law.

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LWDA
April 30, 2024
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If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your attention to this matter and the noble cause you advance each and every day.

Very truly yours,

JUSTICE LAW CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Han', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Douglas Han, Esq.

CC: (By Certified U.S. Mail Only):

Richard J. Pitman
c/o Pitman Family Farms
1075 North Ave
Sanger, CA 93657
Agent for Service of Process for Pitman Family Farms

Richard J. Pitman
c/o Pitman Farms
1075 North Ave
Sanger, CA 93657
Agent for Service of Process for Pitman Family Farms

Richard J. Pitman
c/o Pitman Farms/Newco #1
1075 North Ave
Sanger, CA 93657
Agent for Service of Process for Pitman Family Farms

**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, California 91103 and my electronic service address is eedens@justicelawcorp.com.

On July 12, 2024, I served the foregoing document described as

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT FOR DAMAGES

for the following case: **Soto v. Pitman Family Farms, et al.**
LWDA/Court Case No.: **LWDA Case No.: CM-1025394-24**
Court Case No.: 24CECG02898
Fresno 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 July 12, 2024, at Pasadena, California.



Ethan Edens