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County of Sonoma
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SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SONOMA

TONI ARGO, on behalf of the State of California and Aggrieved Employees,

Plaintiff,

vs.

BEVERAGES & MORE, INC.; and DOES 1-100, inclusive,

Defendants,

Case No. 24CV03802
Assigned for all purposes to Hon. Jane Gaskell Dept. 17

DECLARATION OF TONI ARGO IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF PAGA SETTLEMENT

Complaint Filed: June 26, 2024
Trial Date: None Set.

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DECLARATION OF TONI ARGO

I, Toni Argo, declare as follows:

1. I am the named Plaintiff and represent the State of California and the Aggrieved Employees in the above-captioned matter. I am over the age of 18. The following statements are based on my personal knowledge. If called upon to testify as to the matters stated herein, I could and would do so competently.

2. I submit this declaration in support of the Motion for Approval of PAGA Settlement filed by myself in the above-captioned matter.

3. I was employed as a salary-paid, exempt employee by Defendant Beverages & More, Inc. ("Bevmo" or "Defendant") as a General Store Manager in Petaluma, County, from approximately 2019 until July 2023.

4. I initiated this case on or around May 8, 2024. I have been working diligently on this case for over 2 years. Prior to filing the case, I had multiple telephonic interviews with my attorneys to go over the facts and potential claims of the case. I worked with my attorneys to answer questions and review facts about my employment with Defendant so that they could draft the initial complaint in this case.

5. I knew that there was no guarantee that we would be successful in this case, and that there was a significant chance of protracted litigation. I understood I could potentially be liable for fees and costs. I realized that my name would be on a representative action, and that this information could be visible to others. I also understood that I would have to spend a significant amount of time in the discovery process. However, I felt strongly that Defendant had unlawful wage and hour policies and/or practices. Therefore, I decided to proceed as a representative plaintiff and file a lawsuit. I understood that I would serve as a Named Plaintiff and the representative employee for claims under the PAGA.

6. Although I did not personally respond to formal written discovery in this PAGA Action, I devoted substantial time and effort to the related Class Action, *Argo v. Beverages & More, Inc.*, No. 24CV02839 (Super. Ct. Sonoma Cnty.), and the subsequent arbitration of my individual

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claims, both of which arose from the same core facts and Defendant's common course of conduct challenged in this PAGA Action.

7. In connection with the arbitration of my individual claims in early 2026, Defendant propounded written discovery requests on me, including requests for production and form interrogatories. I worked with my attorneys to respond to approximately 31 requests for production, 20 special interrogatories, and 8 form interrogatories, which required me to carefully review the discovery requests, search for and gather responsive documents related to my employment, and discuss my responses with my attorneys. This work directly informed and supported the prosecution of this PAGA Action, as my individual claims and the claims asserted on behalf of the Aggrieved Employees in this action are based on the same alleged misclassification and wage-and-hour violations. I was also deposed remotely on or around December 11, 2025, understanding the deposition could last seven hours or more, and did last over 5.5 hours. I had a lengthy call with my attorneys in advance of this deposition to make sure I was fully prepared.

8. From my recollection, this action went to mediation on or around January 24, 2025. In advance of mediation, I was able to answer questions from and strategize with my attorneys. I remained on-call during the mediation and stayed updated regarding its progress. Despite the parties' good-faith, arm's-length efforts, we were not able to reach a resolution on the day of mediation. Over the following months, my attorneys kept me informed as settlement negotiations with Defendant continued, and I remained available to answer questions and provide input as needed. Once the parties reached agreement on the material terms of the Settlement, I discussed the terms with my attorneys at length, asked questions about the proposed settlement, and confirmed my belief that it is fair, reasonable, and adequate.

9. After the proposed long-form Settlement was reached, I carefully reviewed the terms on my own, and I also separately discussed the terms at length with my attorneys. I spent time evaluating the proposed terms to ensure that it was fair and reasonable.

10. Based on my own review and my attorneys' evaluation and recommendation, I believe the settlement is fair and reasonable. I signed the Settlement on or around July 20, 2026.

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11. Throughout this action, I have been in constant communication with my attorneys to keep apprised of the status of the litigation and to answer questions necessary for them to pursue this case. I have kept up-to-date on the status at every phase.

12. In sum, I worked with my attorneys to prepare the complaints, provided documents and information regarding my experience working for Defendant, stayed up to date during the multiple mediation and settlement discussions, and otherwise remained in constant contact with my attorneys. I have been involved with this litigation for over 2 years, and during that time I have contributed about 100 hours or more of my own time to the prosecution of these claims.

13. By participating in this case as a Plaintiff, I placed myself at personal risk. For example, I faced: (a) risk to my reputation in my community as a result of stepping forward publicly in a representative action; (b) risk to my reputation as it concerns my future employment opportunities; (c) risk that I would be subject to intrusive discovery and time demands in this litigation; and (d) risk that I would have to pay defense costs if I lost this case. These risks are front and center for me because this lawsuit may be visible to future employers.

14. Nevertheless, I chose to face these risks to challenge the way that Defendant treated its employees on behalf of the State of California and everyone who I believed suffered similar violations of wage and hour laws.

15. In order to make this proposed Settlement a reality, I agreed to a general release. The general release encompasses all claims that I may have, arising out of my employment with Defendant. I agreed to the general release as a condition of settlement in order to resolve my claims and the claims of the Aggrieved Employees.

16. Based on the above, I therefore believe the proposed service award of $10,000 is fair and adequate for my service as the named plaintiff and representative for the State of California and the Aggrieved Employees.

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

Executed on 10 / 20 / 2026 at PETALUMA, California.

Toni Argo

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