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SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FOR THE COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

ZACHARY VAN DYCK, on behalf of himself
and all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

STARWEST BOTANICALS, LLC, a California
Limited Liability Company; and DOES 1-50,
inclusive.

Defendants.

CASE NO.: 24CV024495

**FIRST AMENDED CLASS AND PAGA
ACTION COMPLAINT:**

- (1) FAILURE TO PAY ALL MINIMUM WAGES;
- (2) FAILURE TO PAY ALL OVERTIME WAGES;
- (3) MEAL PERIOD VIOLATIONS;
- (4) REST PERIOD VIOLATIONS;
- (5) WAGE STATEMENT VIOLATIONS;
- (6) WAITING TIME PENALTIES;
- (7) UNFAIR COMPETITION; &
- (8) PENALTIES UNDER THE PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT (“PAGA”)

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

1 Plaintiff Zachary Van Dyck (“Plaintiff”), on behalf of himself and all other similarly situated
2 non-exempt employees, alleges and complains of Defendant Starwest Botanicals, LLC (“Defendant”)
3 and DOES 1 to 50 (collectively, “Defendants”) and each of them, as follows:

4 **INTRODUCTION**

5 1. Defendant is a wholesale, retail, and chemicals company that sells and manufactures
6 organic herbs, spices, teas, and other botanicals.

7 2. Plaintiff brings this class action lawsuit against Defendant for alleged violations of the
8 California Labor Code and Business and Professions Code.

9 3. As set forth below, Plaintiff alleges that Defendant failed to pay for all hours worked
10 due to its failure to record and pay for all time worked off the clock. Plaintiff further alleges that
11 Defendant’s meal and rest period policies and practices failed to allow and permit non-exempt
12 employees to take all compliant and timely meal and rest periods or pay premium wages at the
13 “regular rate of pay” in lieu thereof. Moreover, Plaintiff alleges that Defendant failed to provide non-
14 exempt employees with accurate written itemized wage statements in violation of Labor Code §
15 226(a) and failed to timely pay all final wages upon separation of employment in violation of Labor
16 Code §§ 201-203.

17 4. Plaintiff also brings a claim for civil penalties based on the foregoing Labor Code
18 violations under the Private Attorney General Act (“PAGA”).

19 5. Based on these alleged Labor Code violations, Plaintiff now brings this class action
20 and representative action to recover unpaid wages, restitution, penalties, and other related relief for
21 himself and all other similarly situated non-exempt employees.

22 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

23 6. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and all other similarly situated employees hereby bring
24 this class action for recovery of unpaid wages and penalties under California Labor Code §§ 201-
25 204, 210, 226(a), 226(a)(6), 226(e), 226.3, 226.7, 227.3, 510, 512, 516, 1194, 1197.1, 1199, and
26 applicable Industrial Welfare Commission Wage Orders (“Wage Orders”), in addition to seeking
27 declaratory relief and restitution pursuant to California Business and Professions Code § 17200, *et*
28 *seq.*

7. This class action is brought pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure § 382.

8. This Court has jurisdiction over Defendant's violations of the California Labor Code and applicable Wage Orders because the amount in controversy exceeds this Court's jurisdictional minimum.

9. Venue is proper in this judicial district pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure §§ 395(a) and 395.5, Defendant operates in California within the County of Sacramento, and Defendant is within the jurisdiction of this Court for purposes of service of process.

PARTIES

10. At all relevant times herein, Plaintiff, who is over 18, was and currently is a California resident residing in the State of California.

11. Plaintiff is informed, believes, and alleges that Defendants are authorized to do business within the County of Sacramento and is and/or was the legal employer of Plaintiff and the Class Members during the applicable statutory periods. Plaintiff was, and is, a victim of Defendants' policies and/or practices complained of herein and has been deprived of the rights guaranteed to him by California Labor Code §§ 201-204, 210, 226, 226(a), 226(e), 226.3, 226.7, 227.3, 510, 512, 516, 1194, 1197.1, 1199, and the California Business and Professions Code § 17200 *et seq.*, and applicable Wage Orders.

12. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that during the four years preceding the filing of the Complaint and continuing to the present, Defendants did (and continue to do) business in the State of California, County of Sacramento.

13. Plaintiff does not know the true names or capacities, whether individual, partner, or corporate, of the Defendants sued herein as DOES 1 to 50, inclusive, and for that reason, said Defendants are sued under such fictitious names, and Plaintiff will seek leave from this Court to amend this Complaint when such true names and capacities are discovered. Plaintiff is informed, and believes, and thereon alleges, that each of said fictitious Defendants, whether individual, partners, or corporate, were responsible in some manner for the acts and omissions alleged herein, and proximately caused Plaintiff and the Classes to be subject to the unlawful employment practices alleged herein.

14. Plaintiff is informed, and believes, and thereon alleges, that at all times mentioned herein, Defendants were and are the employers of Plaintiff and all members of the Classes. At all times herein mentioned, each of said Defendants participated in the doing of the acts hereinafter alleged to have been done by the named Defendants. Furthermore, the Defendants, and each of them, were the agents, servants, and employees of each and every one of the other Defendants, as well as the agents of all Defendants, and at all times herein mentioned, were acting within the course and scope of said agency and employment. Defendants, and each of them, approved of, condoned, and/or otherwise ratified each and every one of the acts or omissions complained of herein.

15. At all times mentioned herein, Defendants, and each of them, were members of and engaged in a joint venture, partnership, and common enterprise and acting within the course and scope of and in pursuance of said joint venture, partnership, and common enterprise. Further, Plaintiff alleges that all Defendants were joint employers for all purposes of Plaintiff and all members of the Classes.

COMMON FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

16. Defendant is a wholesale, retail, and chemicals company that sells and manufactures organic herbs, spices, teas, and other botanicals.

17. Plaintiff is employed by Defendant as a non-exempt employee with the title of “Sales Associate” out of Sacramento, California, beginning in August 2023, until his separation from employment on November 22, 2024.

18. Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees (including, but not limited to, Sales Assistant, Maintenance Technician, Mill Operator, Sales Associate, Machine Operator, Mechanic, Data Entry Clerk, Administrative Assistant, and all other non-exempt positions) were responsible for all aspects of Defendant's business in California. However, in these roles, Plaintiff and non-exempt employees were often not afforded all protections and rights conferred under the California Labor Code and applicable Wage Orders.

19. At all relevant times, Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees regularly worked various shifts, many of which were more than 8.0 hours in a workday and 40.0 hours in a workweek. Plaintiff alleges that other non-exempt employees were also subjected to the same policies,

1 procedures, practices, working conditions, and corresponding wage and hour violations to which he
2 was subjected during his employment.

3 20. First, at all relevant times, Defendant has consistently failed to accurately record and
4 pay for all time worked, including the time non-exempt employees were under the employer's control.
5 This included a policy and practice of failing to properly record non-exempt employees' time worked,
6 including all time spent working off the clock. As a result of this company-wide policy/practice,
7 Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees are not compensated for all the hours that they work and
8 all of the overtime hours they work, in violation of Labor Code §§ 204, 210, 510, 1194, 1197.1, 1199,
9 and applicable Wage Orders.

10 21. As a result, over a period of time, Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees were not
11 properly paid for all hours worked in violation of Cal. Labor Code §§ 204, 210, 1194, 1197.1, 1199,
12 and applicable Wage Orders. Additionally, due to the unlawful timekeeping policy/practices, Plaintiff
13 and other non-exempt employees were not properly paid at the correct overtime rate for hours worked
14 in excess of eight hours per shift in violation of Labor Code § 510.

15 22. Labor Code § 1197.1 authorizes employees who are paid less than the minimum fixed
16 by an applicable state or local law or by an order of the commission a civil penalty, restitution of
17 wages, and liquidated damages as follows: (1) for any initial violation that is intentionally committed,
18 one hundred dollars (\$100) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the employee
19 is underpaid....[and] (2) [f]or each subsequent violation for the same specific offense, two hundred
20 fifty dollars (\$250) for each underpaid employee for each pay period for which the employee is
21 underpaid regardless of whether the initial violation was intentionally committed.

22 23. Labor Code § 510 requires an employer to compensate an employee who works more
23 than eight (8) hours in one workday, forty (40) hours in a workweek, and for the first eight (8) hours
24 worked on the seventh consecutive day, no less than one and one-half times (1 1/2) the regular rate of
25 pay. In addition, Labor Code § 510 obligates employers to compensate employees at no less than
26 twice the regular rate of pay when an employee works more than twelve (12) hours in a workday or
27 more than eight (8) hours on the seventh consecutive day of work. Pursuant to Section 3 of the
28 applicable Wage Orders, non-exempt employees shall not be employed more than eight (8) hours in

1 any workday or more than 40 hours in any workweek unless the employee receives one and one-half
2 (1 1/2) times such employee's regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 40 hours in the workweek.

3 24. Moreover, at all relevant times, Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees were denied
4 compliant and timely 30-minute off-duty meal periods as mandated by California law. Due to
5 Defendant's uniform meal period policies/practices, operational requirements, and work demands,
6 Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees often could not take timely and uninterrupted net 30-
7 minute first meal periods before the end of the fifth hour of work. Further, when Plaintiff and other
8 non-exempt employees worked more than 10.0 hours in a shift, they were not allowed and permitted
9 to take a mandated second meal period before the end of the tenth hour of work in violation of the
10 Labor Code and applicable Wage Orders. Indeed, Plaintiff's and other non-exempt employees' meal
11 periods were often interrupted and/or lasted fewer than 30 minutes due to Defendant's meal period
12 policies/procedures, operational requirements, and work demands.

13 25. In addition, for each missed or non-compliant meal period, Defendant failed and
14 continues to fail to maintain a mechanism by which non-exempt employees were paid meal period
15 premiums at the "regular rate of pay" pursuant to *Ferra v. Loews Hollywood Hotel, LLC* (2021) 11
16 5th 858 and Labor Code § 226.7.

17 26. Accordingly, due to Defendant's uniform meal period practices, non-exempt
18 employees were also regularly denied legally compliant meal periods in violation of Labor Code §§
19 226.7, 510, 516, and applicable Wage Orders.

20 27. Next, at all relevant times, Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees were not
21 provided with all 10-minute rest periods for every four hours worked, or a major fraction thereof, due
22 to Defendant's uniform rest period policies/practices, operational requirements and work demands.
23 As a result, Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees were and are often unable to take a net 10-
24 minute duty-free rest period for every major fraction of four hours worked. This includes a second
25 rest period for shifts in excess of six hours and a third rest period for shifts in excess of 10.0 hours in
26 a workday.

27 28. By not relieving all non-exempt employees of all duties during rest periods, Defendant
28 failed to provide legally compliant rest periods. See *Augustus v. ABM Security Services, Inc.* (2016)

1 2 Cal. 5th 257, 269 [concluding that “during rest periods employers must relieve employees of all
2 duties and relinquish control over how employees spend their time.”] (Emphasis added). In *Augustus*,
3 the California Supreme Court expressly rejected the employer’s assertion that it could provide an on-
4 duty rest period to employees who worked as security guards and further explained: “that employers
5 [must] relinquish any control over how employees spend their break time and relieve their employees
6 of all duties.” *Id.* at 273. Each time non-exempt employees could not take a compliant rest period;
7 Defendant failed and continues to fail to adequately pay rest period premium payments at the “regular
8 rate of pay” as required by Labor Code § 226.7.

9 29. Accordingly, due to Defendant’s uniform rest period policies/practices, non-exempt
10 employees were regularly denied legally compliant rest breaks in violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7,
11 512, and applicable Wage Orders.

12 30. As a result of Defendant’s failure to pay Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees for
13 all hours they were subject to the control of Defendant, including all minimum and overtime wages,
14 and Defendant’s failure to pay all meal and rest period premiums at the “regular rate of pay,”
15 Defendant issued wage statements which failed to identify the gross wages earned accurately, the
16 total hours worked, the net wages earned, and the correct corresponding number of hours worked at
17 each hourly rate, in violation of Labor Code § 226(a)(1, 2, 5, and 9).

18 31. Labor Code § 226.3 provides that “[a]ny employer who violates subdivision (a) of
19 Section 226 shall be subject to a civil penalty in the amount of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) per
20 employee per violation in an initial violation and one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per employee for
21 each violation in a subsequent citation, for which the employer fails to provide the employee a wage
22 deduction statement or fails to keep the required in subdivision (a) of Section 226.”

23 32. Thus, for the violations of Labor Code section 226 described above, Plaintiff and other
24 non-exempt employees may also recover Labor Code § 226.3 penalties for Defendant’s violations of
25 Labor Code § 226(a). Consequently, because Defendant failed to comply with Labor Code § 226(a),
26 Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees would be entitled to recover penalties under Labor Code §
27 226(e).

28 33. Finally, because Defendant failed to pay all minimum wages, overtime wages, and

1 meal and rest period premiums at the “regular rate of pay,” Defendant also failed and continues to
2 fail to pay Plaintiff and other non-exempt employees all wages owed at their time of separation from
3 employment in violation of Labor Code §§ 201-203. Thus, non-exempt employees would be entitled
4 to recover waiting time penalties under Labor Code §§ 201-203.

5 CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS

6 34. Plaintiff brings this action on behalf of himself and the following Classes pursuant to
7 § 382 of the Code of Civil Procedure:

8 All current or former non-exempt hourly employees who work or worked
9 for Defendant in California during the four years immediately preceding the
filing of the Complaint through the date of trial. (the “Class”);

10 All current or former non-exempt employees who worked for Defendant in
11 California and worked overtime hours during at least one shift during the
12 four years immediately preceding the filing of the Complaint through the
date of trial. (“the Overtime Subclass”);

13 All current or former employees who work or worked for Defendant in
14 California during the one year immediately preceding the filing of the
Complaint through the date of trial. (“the Wage Statement Subclass”)

15 All employees who work or worked for Defendant in California and who
16 left their employment during the three years immediately preceding the
17 filing of the Complaint through the date of trial. (“Waiting Time Penalty
Subclass”)

18 (collectively “the Classes”)

19 35. **Numerosity/Ascertainability:** The members of the Classes are so numerous that
20 joinder of all members would be unfeasible and not practicable. The membership of the Classes is
21 unknown to Plaintiff at this time; however, it is estimated that the Classes consist of at least one
22 hundred (100) individuals. The identity of such membership is readily ascertainable via inspection of
23 Defendant’s employment and payroll records.

24 36. **Common Questions of Law and Fact Predominate/Well-Defined Community of**
25 **Interest:** There are common questions of law and fact as to Plaintiff and all other similarly situated
26 non-exempt employees, which predominate over questions affecting only individual members
27 including, without limitation to:

- 28 1. Whether Defendant failed to record and pay for all hours worked by Class Members;

2. Whether Defendant provided legally compliant meal and rest periods or proper compensation at the “regular rate of pay” in lieu thereof to members of the Class;

3. Whether Defendant furnished legally compliant wage statements to members of the Wage Statement Subclass pursuant to Labor Code § 226(a); and

4. Whether the timing and amount of payment of final wages to members of the Waiting Time Penalty Subclass at the time of separation from employment were unlawful.

37. **Predominance of Common Questions:** Common questions of law and fact predominate over questions that affect only individual members of the Classes. The common questions of law set forth above are numerous and substantial and stem from Defendant’s policies and/or practices applicable to each individual class member, such as without limitation, Defendant’s failure to pay for all hours worked, Defendant’s failure to provide all compliant meal and rest periods or premiums at the “regular rate of pay” in lieu thereof, Defendant’s failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements, and Defendant’s failure to pay for all wages due upon separation of employment. As such, the common questions predominate over individual questions concerning each class member’s showing as to his or her eligibility for recovery or the amount of his or her damages.

38. **Typicality:** The claims of Plaintiff are typical of the claims of the Classes because Plaintiff was employed by Defendant as a non-exempt employee in California during the statute(s) of limitation applicable to each cause of action pled in the Complaint in this action. As alleged herein, Plaintiff, like the members of the Classes, was deprived of minimum and overtime wages, was deprived of meal and rest period premium wages, was subject to Defendant’s uniform meal and rest period policies/practices, was not provided accurate itemized wage statements, and was not timely paid all wages owed upon separation of employment.

39. **Adequacy of Representation:** Plaintiff is fully prepared to take all necessary steps to represent fairly and adequately the interests of the members of the Classes. Moreover, Plaintiff’s attorneys are ready, willing, and able to fully and adequately represent the members of the Classes. Plaintiff’s attorneys have prosecuted and are actively litigating several wage-and-hour class actions in state and federal courts and are committed to vigorously prosecuting this action on behalf of the members of the Classes.

40. **Superiority:** The California Labor Code is broadly remedial in nature and serves an important public interest in establishing minimum working conditions and standards in California. These laws and labor standards protect the average working employee from exploitation by employers who have the responsibility to follow the laws and who may seek to take advantage of superior economic and bargaining power in setting onerous terms and conditions of employment. The nature of this action and the format of laws available to Plaintiff and members of the Classes make the class action format a particularly efficient and appropriate procedure to redress the violations alleged herein. If each employee were required to file an individual lawsuit, Defendant would necessarily gain an unconscionable advantage since they could exploit and overwhelm the limited resources of each individual plaintiff with their vastly superior financial and legal resources.

41. Moreover, requiring each member of the Classes to pursue an individual remedy would also discourage the assertion of lawful claims by employees who would be disinclined to file an action against their former and/or current employer for real and justifiable fear of retaliation and permanent damages to their careers at subsequent employment. Further, the prosecution of separate actions by the individual class members, even if possible, would create a substantial risk of inconsistent or varying verdicts or adjudications with respect to the individual class members against Defendant herein and which would establish potentially incompatible standards of conduct for Defendant; and/or legal determinations with respect to individual class members which would, as a practical matter, be dispositive of the interest of the other class members not parties to adjudications or which would substantially impair or impede the ability of the class members to protect their interests. Further, the claims of the individual members of the class are not sufficiently large to warrant vigorous individual prosecution considering all of the concomitant costs and expenses attending thereto. As such, the Classes identified in Paragraph 34 are maintainable as Classes under § 382 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION

MINIMUM WAGE VIOLATIONS

(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)

42. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

1 43. Section 4 of the applicable Wage Order(s) and Labor Code §§ 1197 and 1182.12
2 establish the right of employees to be paid minimum wages for all hours worked, in amounts set by
3 state law. Labor Code §§ 1194(a) and 1194.2(a) provide that an employee who has not been paid the
4 legal minimum wage as required by Labor Code § 1197 may recover the unpaid balance together
5 with attorneys' fees and costs of suit, as well as liquidated damages in an amount equal to the unpaid
6 wages and interest accrued thereon.

7 44. At all relevant times herein, Defendant failed to record all time accurately worked,
8 including failing to record time worked properly and all time spent working off-the-clock, which
9 resulted in these individuals not being paid for all hours they actually suffered or permitted to work.
10 Accordingly, Plaintiff and members of the Classes were not compensated for all hours worked,
11 including all hours they were subject to the control of Defendant and/or suffered or permitted to work
12 under the Labor Code and applicable Wage Orders.

13 45. Labor Code § 1198 makes an employee's employment unlawful under conditions the
14 Industrial Welfare Commission prohibits. Labor Code §§ 1194(a) and 1194.2(a) provide that an
15 employer who has failed to pay its employees the legal minimum wage is liable to pay those
16 employees the unpaid balance of the unpaid wages as well as liquidated damages in an amount equal
17 to the wages due and interest thereon.

18 46. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's unlawful conduct as alleged herein,
19 Plaintiff and the Classes have sustained economic damages, including but not limited to unpaid wages
20 and lost interest, in an amount to be established at trial, and they are entitled to recover economic and
21 statutory damages and penalties and other appropriate relief as a result of Defendant's violations of
22 the Labor Code and applicable Wage Orders.

23 47. Defendant's practice and uniform administration of corporate policy regarding illegal
24 employee compensation is unlawful and creates an entitlement to recovery by Plaintiff and members
25 of the Classes in a civil action for the unpaid amount of minimum wages, liquidated damages,
26 including interest thereon, statutory penalties, attorney's fees, and costs of suit according to Labor
27 Code §§ 204, 558, 1194 *et seq.*, 1197, 1198, and Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5.

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1 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **FAILURE TO PAY ALL OVERTIME WAGES**

3 **(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)**

4 48. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates all previous paragraphs by reference.

5 49. This cause of action is brought pursuant to Labor Code §§ 204, 210, 510, 558, 1194,
6 and 1198, which provide that non-exempt employees are entitled to overtime wages for all overtime
7 hours worked and provide a private right of action for the failure to pay all overtime compensation
8 for overtime work performed.

9 50. At all times relevant herein, Defendant was required to properly pay Plaintiff and
10 members of the Overtime Subclass for all overtime hours worked pursuant to California Labor Code
11 § 1194 and the applicable Wage Orders.

12 51. Section 3 of the applicable Wage Order requires an employer to pay an employee “one
13 and one-half (1 1/2) times the employee’s regular rate of pay” for work in excess of 8 hours per
14 workday and/or in excess of 40 hours of work in the workweek. The same section also requires an
15 employer to pay an employee double the employee’s regular rate of pay for work in excess of twelve
16 hours each workday and/or for work in excess of 8 hours on the seventh consecutive day of work in
17 the workweek. Defendant caused Plaintiff to work overtime and hours but did not compensate
18 Plaintiff or members of the Overtime Subclass at one and one-half times their “regular rate of pay”
19 for such hours.

20 52. At all relevant times herein, Defendant failed to conform its pay practices to the
21 requirements of the law. This unlawful conduct includes, but is not limited to, Defendant’s failure to
22 pay for all hours properly worked off-the-clock as alleged herein above, which resulted in these
23 individuals not being paid for all overtime hours worked.

24 53. The foregoing policies and practices are unlawful and create an entitlement to recovery
25 by Plaintiff and the members of the Overtime Subclass in a civil action for the unpaid amount of
26 overtime wages, including interest thereon, statutory penalties, attorney’s fees, and costs of suit
27 according to Labor Code §§ 204, 210, 510, 1194, and 1198, the applicable Wage Orders, and Code
28 of Civil Procedure § 1021.5.

1 **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **MEAL PERIOD VIOLATIONS**

3 **(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)**

4 54. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates all previous paragraphs by reference.

5 55. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Defendant failed in
6 its affirmative obligation to provide all of their hourly non-exempt employees, including Plaintiff and
7 members of the Class, with all required meal periods in accordance with the mandates of the
8 California Labor Code and applicable Wage Orders, for the reasons set forth in the Common
9 Allegations section of this Complaint.

10 56. Despite Defendant's violations, Defendant has not paid an additional hour of pay at
11 the "regular rate of pay" to Plaintiff and Class members at their respective regular rates of pay for
12 each violation, per California Labor Code § 226.7.

13 57. As a result, Defendant is responsible for paying premium compensation for meal
14 period violations, including interest thereon, statutory penalties, and costs of suit pursuant to the
15 applicable Wage Orders, Labor Code §§ 226.7, 512, and Civil Code §§ 3287(b) and 3289.

16 **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

17 **REST PERIOD VIOLATIONS**

18 **(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)**

19 58. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates all previous paragraphs by reference.

20 59. Section 12 of the applicable Wage Orders and Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 516 establish
21 the right of non-exempt employees to be provided with a rest period of at least ten (10) minutes for
22 each four (4) hour period worked, or major fraction thereof.

23 60. Due to its unlawful rest period policy/practices and operational requirements/work
24 demands, Defendant did not authorize and permit Plaintiff and Class members to take all rest periods
25 to which they were legally entitled.

26 61. Despite Defendant's violations, Defendant has not paid an additional hour of pay at
27 the "regular rate of pay" to Plaintiff and Class members at their respective regular rates of pay for
28 each violation, per California Labor Code § 226.7.

1 62. The foregoing violations create an entitlement to recovery by Plaintiff and members
2 of the Class in a civil action for the unpaid amount of rest period premiums owing, including interest
3 thereon, statutory penalties, and costs of suit pursuant to the applicable Wage Orders, Labor Code §§
4 226.7 and 516, and Civil Code §§ 3287(b) and 3289.

5 **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

6 **FAILURE TO PROVIDE ACCURATE ITEMIZED WAGE STATEMENTS**

7 **(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)**

8 63. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates all previous paragraphs by reference.

9 64. Labor Code 226(a) states in pertinent part the following:

10 “(a) An employer, semimonthly or at the time of each payment of wages,
11 shall furnish to his or her employee, either as a detachable part of the check,
12 draft, or voucher paying the employee’s wages, or separately if wages are
13 paid by personal check or cash, an accurate itemized statement in writing
14 showing (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee,
15 (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the
16 employee is paid on a piece-rate basis, (4) all deductions, provided that all
17 deductions made on written orders of the employee may be aggregated and
18 shown as one item, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the
19 period for which the employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and
20 only the last four digits of his or her social security number or an employee
21 identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name and
22 address of the legal entity that is the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly
23 rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours
24 worked at each hourly rate by the employee.”

20 65. As set forth above, during the Class Period, Defendant issued and continues to issue
21 wage statements to its employees, including Plaintiff and members of the Wage Statement Subclass,
22 which are inadequate under Labor Code Section § 226(a).

23 66. As a result of Defendant’s failure to pay Plaintiff and the Wage Statement Subclass
24 for all minimum and overtime wages, and missed meal and rest period premiums at the appropriate
25 legal rate, Defendant failed to include required information on Plaintiff and the Wage Statement
26 Subclass’ wage statements, including, but not limited to, the gross wages earned, the net wages earned
27 in violation of Labor Code section 226(a), (1,2,5, and 9).

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67. Defendant's failure to comply with section 226(a) of the Labor Code was knowing and intentional.

68. As a result of Defendant's issuance of inaccurate itemized wage statements to Plaintiff and members of the Wage Statement Subclass in violation of section 226(a) of the California Labor Code, Plaintiff and members of the Wage Statement Subclass are each entitled to recover an initial penalty of \$50, and subsequent penalties of \$100, up to an amount not exceeding an aggregate penalty of \$4,000 per Plaintiff and per every member of the Wage Statement Subclass from Defendant's pursuant to section 226(e) of the Labor Code, costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

SIXTH CAUSE OF ACTION

WAITING TIME PENALTIES

(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)

69. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

70. The actionable period for this cause of action is three years before the filing of this Complaint through the present and ongoing until the violation is corrected, or the class is certified.

71. Labor Code §§ 201 and 202 require Defendant to pay all compensation due and owing to Plaintiff and the Waiting Time Subclass during the actionable period for this cause of action at or around the time their employment is or was terminated or ended.

72. Labor Code § 203 provides that if an employer willfully fails to pay compensation promptly upon discharge or resignation, as required by Labor Code sections 201 and 202, the employer is liable for penalties for continued compensation up to thirty (30) workdays.

73. Defendant willfully failed to pay the Waiting Time Subclass for all hours worked, including all minimum and overtime wages, and their meal and rest period premiums at the “regular rate of pay” before or upon termination or separation from employment with Defendant as required by Labor Code §§ 201 and 202.

74. As a result, Defendant is liable to the Waiting Time Subclass for waiting time penalties amounting to thirty (30) days wages for Plaintiff and the Waiting Time Subclass pursuant to Labor Code § 203. *See, e.g.,* DLSE Manual, 4.3.4 (Failure to pay any wages due upon termination entitles an employee to recover waiting time penalties).

1 **SEVENTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

2 **UNFAIR COMPETITION**

3 **(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)**

4 75. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

5 76. Defendant has engaged and continues to engage in unfair and/or unlawful business
6 practices in California in violation of California Business and Professions Code § 17200 *et seq.*, by
7 failing to pay for all hours worked, by failing to provide all legally required meal and rest periods or
8 pay premium payments at the “regular rate of pay” in lieu thereof, by failing to provide accurate wage
9 statements, and by failing to pay all earned wages at the time of separation from employment.

10 77. Defendant’s utilization of these unfair and/or unlawful business practices deprived
11 Plaintiff and continues to deprive members of the Classes of compensation to which they are legally
12 entitled, constitutes unfair and/or unlawful competition, and provides an unfair advantage over
13 Defendant’s competitors who have been and/or are currently employing workers and attempting to
14 do so in honest compliance with applicable wage and hour laws.

15 78. Because Plaintiff is a victim of Defendant’s unfair and/or unlawful conduct alleged
16 herein, Plaintiff, for himself and on behalf of the members of the Classes, seeks full restitution of
17 monies, as necessary and according to proof, to restore any and all monies withheld, acquired and/or
18 converted by Defendant pursuant to Business and Professions Code §§ 17203 and 17208.

19 79. The acts complained of herein occurred within the last four years immediately
20 preceding the filing of the Complaint in this action.

21 80. Plaintiff was compelled to retain the services of counsel to file this court action to
22 protect his interests and those of the Classes, to obtain restitution and injunctive relief on behalf of
23 Defendant’s current hourly non-exempt employees, and to enforce important rights affecting the
24 public interest. Plaintiff has thereby incurred the financial burden of attorneys’ fees and costs, which
25 he is entitled to recover under Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5.

26 **EIGHT CAUSE OF ACTION**

27 **PRIVATE ATTORNEYS GENERAL ACT**

28 **(AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS)**

1 81. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference all previous paragraphs.

2 82. Defendant has committed several Labor Code violations against Plaintiff and other
3 similarly aggrieved employees. Plaintiff, an “aggrieved employee” within the meaning of Labor Code
4 § 2698 *et seq.*, acting on behalf of himself and other similarly aggrieved employees, brings this PAGA
5 representative action against Defendant to recover the civil penalties due to Plaintiff, other similarly
6 aggrieved employees, and the State of California according to proof pursuant to Labor Code § 2699
7 (a) and (f) including, but not limited to (1) \$100 for each initial violation and (2) \$200 for each
8 subsequent violation per employee per pay period for those violations of the Labor Code for which
9 no civil penalty is specifically provided based on the following Labor Code violations:

10 a) Failing to pay Plaintiff and similarly Aggrieve Employees for all minimum and
11 overtime wages for all hours worked or for which they were subject to the control of the employer;

12 b) Failing to provide Plaintiff and other similarly Aggrieved Employees with all of their
13 statutorily mandated meal periods in violation of Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 1194 and 1198;

14 c) Failing to authorize and permit Plaintiff and other similarly Aggrieved employees
15 with all of their statutorily mandated rest periods in violation of Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 516;

16 d) Failing to furnish Plaintiff and other similarly situated employees with complete,
17 accurate, itemized wage statements in violations of Labor Code § 226(a) and applicable Wage Orders;
18 and

19 e) Failing to pay final wages in a timely manner in violation of Labor Code §§ 201-203
20 and applicable Wage Orders.

21 83. On or about December 2, 2024, Plaintiff notified Defendant Starwest Botanicals, LLC.
22 (“Defendant”) and the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”) via email
23 of Defendant’s violations of the California Labor Code § 2698 *et seq.*, with respect to violations of
24 the California Labor Code identified in Paragraph 82 (a)-(e). Now that the sixty-five days have passed
25 from Plaintiff notifying Defendant of these violations, Plaintiff has exhausted his administrative
26 requirements for bringing a claim under the Private Attorneys General Act with respect to these
27 violations.

28 84. Plaintiff was compelled to retain the services of counsel to file this court action to

1 protect his interests and the interests of similarly aggrieved employees, and to assess and collect the
2 civil penalties owed by Defendant. Plaintiff has hereby incurred attorneys' fees and costs, which he
3 is entitled to receive under California Labor Code § 2699.

4 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

5 **WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff prays for judgment for himself and all others on whose behalf this
6 suit is brought against Defendant, as follows:

- 7 1. For an order certifying the proposed Classes;
- 8 2. For an order appointing Plaintiff as representative of the Classes;
- 9 3. For an order appointing Counsel for Plaintiff as Counsel for the Classes;
- 10 4. Upon the First and Second Cause of Action for compensatory, consequential,
11 general, and special damages according to proof pursuant to Labor Code §§ 204, 210, 510, 1194,
12 1197, 1197.1, and 1198 and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs;
- 13 5. Upon the Third Cause of Action, for compensatory, consequential, general, and
14 special damages according to proof pursuant to Labor Code §§ 204, 210, 510, 1194, 1197, and 1198
15 and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs;
- 16 6. Upon the Third Cause of Action, for compensatory, consequential, general, and
17 special damages according to proof pursuant to Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512;
- 18 7. Upon the Fourth Cause of Action, for compensatory, consequential, general, and
19 special damages according to proof pursuant to Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 516;
- 20 8. Upon the Fifth Cause of Action, penalties pursuant to Labor Code § 226(a), and
21 reasonable costs and attorneys' fees;
- 22 9. Upon the Sixth Cause of Action, for statutory waiting time penalties pursuant to
23 Labor Code §§ 201-203
- 24 10. Upon the Seventh Cause of Action, for restitution to Plaintiff and members of the
25 Classes of all money and/or property unlawfully acquired by Defendant by means of any acts or
26 practices declared by this Court to be in violation of Business and Professions Code § 17200 *et seq.*;
- 27 11. Upon the Eighth Cause of Action, for civil penalties due to Plaintiff, other similarly
28 Aggrieved Employees, and the State of California according to proof pursuant to Labor Code § 2699

1 (a) and (f) including, but not limited to: (1) \$100.00 for each initial violation and \$200 for each
2 subsequent violation per employee per pay period for those violations of the Labor Code for which
3 no civil penalty is specifically provided under the Labor Code, and for reasonable attorneys' fees and
4 costs;

5 12. Prejudgment interest on all due and unpaid wages pursuant to California Labor Code
6 § 218.6 and Civil Code §§ 3287 and 3289;

7 13. On all causes of action, for attorneys' fees and costs as provided by Labor Code §§
8 218.5, 226, 1194, Code of Civil Procedure § 1021.5; and

9 14. For such other relief that the Court may deem just and proper.

10 Dated: June 25, 2025

FALAKASSA LAW, P.C.
BOKHOUR LAW GROUP, P.C.

11
12
13 By: _____

Joshua Falakassa, Esq.

Mehrdad Bokhour, Esq.

Attorneys for Plaintiff and the Putative Classes

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PROOF OF SERVICE

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 eighteen years and not a party to the within action; my business address is 1901 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 920, Los Angeles, California 90067.

On June 25, 2025, I served the following document(s) described as **FIRST AMENDED CLASS AND PAGA ACTION COMPLAINT** on the interested parties in this action:

Gene Ryu, Esq.
Gene.Ryu@klgates.com
Kendall Cole, Esq.
Kendall.Cole@klgates.com
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10100 Santa Monica Blvd, 8th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90067

Attorneys for Defendant
STARWEST BOTANICALS, LLC

BY ELECTRONIC SERVICE: I transmitted the above-referenced document(s) via electronic service provider First Legal to the person(s) identified above at the email address(es) indicated and did not, within a reasonable time after transmission, receive any message or communication indicating that delivery failed or that any other error had occurred which would delay or caused failure in transmission and delivery of the document and/or any attachments thereto.

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

Executed on June 25, 2025, at Los Angeles, California.

/s/ Carlos Garcia

Carlos Garcia