

Exhibit A

1 **MELMED LAW GROUP P.C.**
 Jonathan Melmed (SBN 290218)
 2 jm@melmedlaw.com
 Laura Supanich (SBN 314805)
 3 lms@melmedlaw.com
 4 1801 Century Park East, Suite 850
 Los Angeles, California 90067
 5 Phone: (310) 824-3828
 Fax: (310) 862-6851
 6

7 Attorneys for Plaintiff, the Putative Class, and the Aggrieved Employees

8 *Additional Counsel Listed on Next Page*

9 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
 10 **FOR THE COUNTY OF MENDOCINO**

11
 12 VICENTE JARA, an individual, on behalf of
 himself, the State of California, as a private
 13 attorney general, and on behalf of all others
 14 similarly situated,

15 Plaintiff,

16 v.

17
 18 H & M LOGGING, INC., a California
 corporation; and DOES 1 TO 50,

19 Defendants.
 20

Case No.: 24CV00821

**Settlement Agreement and Release of Class
 Action**

21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26
 27
 28

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

Berliner Cohen LLP
Eileen Kennedy (SBN 206464)
Eileen.kennedy@berliner.com
10 Almaden Blvd., Eleventh Floor
San Jose, California 95113

Attorneys for Defendant H & M Logging, Inc.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE OF CLASS ACTION

This Settlement Agreement and Release of Class Action (“Settlement Agreement”) is made and entered into by: (1) Plaintiff Vicente Jara (“Plaintiff”), individually and in his representative capacity on behalf of the Settlement Class, as defined below, and as a private attorney general on behalf of the State of California; and (2) Defendant H & M Logging, Inc. (“Defendant”). Plaintiff and Defendant are collectively referred to herein as the “Parties.” This Settlement Agreement is subject to the approval of the Court, pursuant to California Rules of Court, rule 3.769, subdivisions (c), (d), and (e), and is made for the sole purpose of attempting to consummate settlement of the action on a class-wide basis subject to the following terms and conditions. As detailed below, if the Court does not enter an order granting final approval of this Settlement Agreement or the conditions precedent are not met for any reason, this Settlement Agreement is void and of no force or effect whatsoever.

1. DEFINITIONS

As used in this Settlement Agreement, the following terms shall have the meanings specified below. To the extent terms or phrases used in this Settlement Agreement are not specifically defined below, but are defined elsewhere in this Settlement Agreement, they are incorporated by reference into this definition section.

1.1. ACTION

“Action” shall mean the following civil action: *Vicente Jara v. H & M Logging, Inc.*, case number 24CV00821, currently pending before the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Mendocino.

1.2. ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

“Administrative Expenses” shall include all costs and expenses associated with and paid to the third-party settlement administrator, which are estimated not to exceed \$10,000.00.

1.3. APPLICABLE WAGE ORDER

“Applicable Wage Order” shall mean the California Industrial Welfare Commission (“IWC”) Wage Order applicable to the facts of this case, including IWC Wage Order 16-2001 and others that may be applicable. (Cal. Code of Regs., tit. 8, § 11160.)

1 **1.4. CLAIMS**

2 “Claims” shall mean the claims asserted in the Action.

3 **1.5. CLASS ATTORNEY FEES AND EXPENSES**

4 “Class Attorney Fees and Expenses” shall mean the portion of the Gross Settlement Amount
5 attributable to attorney fees and litigation expenses. The Parties agree that the fee-portion of the Class
6 Attorney Fees and Expenses shall be up to one-third of the Gross Settlement Amount (i.e., \$30,753.33),
7 as approved by the Court, and the award of costs and expenses shall be up to an additional \$15,000.00.
8 If the Escalator Provision described below is triggered so as to increase the Gross Settlement Amount,
9 the Parties agree that the fee portion of the Class Attorney Fees and Expenses will increase
10 proportionally such that the total amount of attorneys’ fees remains one-third of the Gross Settlement
11 Amount *after* the upward adjustment required by the Escalator Provision is implemented.

12 **1.6. CLASS COUNSEL**

13 “Class Counsel” shall mean Jonathan Melmed and Laura Supanich of Melmed Law Group P.C.

14 **1.7. CLASS MEMBER**

15 “Class Member” shall mean any person who is a prospective member of the Settlement Class,
16 or, if such person is incompetent or deceased, the person’s legal guardian, executor, heir, or successor-
17 in-interest.

18 **1.8. CLASS NOTICE**

19 “Class Notice” shall mean the *Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement*, as set forth in the
20 form of **Exhibit 1** attached hereto, or as otherwise approved by the Court, which is to be mailed to
21 Class Members along with the Share Form.

22 **1.9. CLASS PARTICIPANTS**

23 “Class Participants” shall mean all Class Members who do not timely request exclusion from
24 the Class Settlement.

25 **1.10. CLASS PERIOD**

26 “Class Period” shall mean the period from July 10, 2020, through the date of preliminary
27 approval of the settlement.
28

1 **1.11. CLASS REPRESENTATIVE**

2 “Class Representative” shall mean Plaintiff Vicente Jara.

3 **1.12. CLASS SETTLEMENT**

4 “Class Settlement” shall mean the settlement embodied in this Settlement Agreement, which is
5 subject to Court approval.

6 **1.13. COMPLAINT**

7 “Complaint” shall mean the currently-operative complaint in the Action.

8 **1.14. COURT**

9 “Court” shall mean the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Mendocino.

10 **1.15. DEFENDANT**

11 “Defendant” shall mean Defendant H & M Logging, Inc..

12 **1.16. DEFENSE COUNSEL**

13 “Defense Counsel” shall mean the attorneys representing Defendant.

14 **1.17. EFFECTIVE DATE**

15 “Effective Date” shall be the date when all of the following events have occurred: **(a)** this
16 Settlement Agreement has been executed by all Parties and by Class Counsel and Defense Counsel;
17 **(b)** the Court has given preliminary approval to the Class Settlement; **(c)** notice has been given to the
18 Settlement Class providing them with an opportunity to request exclusion from the Class Settlement;
19 **(d)** the Court has held a Final Approval and Fairness Hearing and entered a final order and judgment
20 certifying the Settlement Class and approving this Settlement Agreement; and **(e)** the later of the
21 following events: **(i)** the expiration of the period for filing any appeal, writ, or other appellate
22 proceeding opposing the Class Settlement has elapsed without any appeal, writ, or other appellate
23 proceeding having been filed; **(ii)** the dismissal of any appeal, writ, or other appellate proceeding
24 opposing the Class Settlement with no right to pursue further remedies or relief; or **(iii)** any appeal,
25 writ, or the issuance of such other final appellate order upholding the Court’s final order with no right
26 to pursue further remedies or relief. In this regard, it is the intention of the Parties that the Class
27 Settlement shall not become effective until the Court’s order approving the Class Settlement is
28 completely final and there is no further recourse by an appellant or objector who seeks to contest the

1 Class Settlement. If no objections are filed, the Effective Date shall be after steps (a) through (d) are
2 completed (i.e., the date that the court has entered a final order and judgment certifying the Settlement
3 Class and approving this Settlement Agreement).

4 **1.18. EMPLOYEE’S TAXES AND REQUIRED WITHHOLDING**

5 “Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholding” shall mean the employee’s share of any and all
6 applicable federal, state, or local payroll taxes, including those collected under authority of the Federal
7 Insurance Contributions Act (FICA), the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA), and/or the State
8 Unemployment Tax Act (SUTA) on the portion of any Class Participant’s Individual Settlement
9 Amount that constitutes wages. The Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholdings will be withheld
10 from and paid out of the Individual Settlement Amounts paid from the Net Settlement Amount.

11 **1.19. EMPLOYER’S TAXES**

12 “Employer’s Taxes” shall mean and refer to Defendant’s share of payroll taxes (e.g.,
13 Unemployment Insurance, Employment Training Tax, Social Security, and Medicare taxes) that is
14 owed on the portion of any Class Participant’s Individual Settlement Amount that constitutes wages.
15 The Employer’s Taxes shall be separately paid by Defendant and shall not be paid from the Gross
16 Settlement Amount or Net Settlement Amount.

17 **1.20. FINAL APPROVAL AND FAIRNESS HEARING**

18 “Final Approval and Fairness Hearing” shall mean the final hearing held to ascertain the
19 fairness, reasonableness, and adequacy of the Class Settlement.

20 **1.21. GROSS SETTLEMENT AMOUNT**

21 “Gross Settlement Amount” is the agreed upon non-reversionary settlement amount totaling
22 \$92,260.00 to be paid by Defendant in full settlement of the Released Claims asserted in this case,
23 inclusive of the Administrative Expenses, the Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholdings, the Class
24 Attorney Fees and Expenses, the Incentive Award, and PAGA Payment. Defendant shall separately
25 pay its share of the Employer’s Taxes in addition to the Gross Settlement Amount on the portion of
26 each Individual Settlement Amount allocated as wages.

27

28

1 **1.22. HEARING ON PRELIMINARY APPROVAL**

2 “Hearing on Preliminary Approval” shall mean the hearing held on the motion for preliminary
3 approval of the Class Settlement.

4 **1.23. INCENTIVE AWARD**

5 “Incentive Award” shall mean any additional monetary payment provided to the Class
6 Representative for his efforts and risks on behalf of the Settlement Class in this Action.

7 **1.24. INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT AMOUNT**

8 “Individual Settlement Amount” shall mean the amount which is ultimately distributed to each
9 Class Participant, less any Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholdings. The Individual Settlement
10 Amount does not include any portion of the PAGA Payment.

11 **1.25. NET SETTLEMENT AMOUNT**

12 “Net Settlement Amount” shall mean the Gross Settlement Amount minus: Administrative
13 Expenses; Class Attorney Fees and Expenses; 75% of the share of the Gross Settlement Amount
14 allocated toward penalties pursuant to the Labor Code Private Attorney General Act of 2004
15 (“PAGA”), codified at Labor Code sections 2698 through 2699.6, which are payable to the California
16 Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”); and Plaintiff’s Incentive Award.

17 **1.26. OPT OUT**

18 “Opt Out” shall refer to the process of submitting a timely and valid request for exclusion from
19 the Class Settlement in accordance with the terms of the Class Notice and no later than the Response
20 Deadline.

21 **1.27. OPT-OUTS**

22 “Opt-Outs” shall mean all persons who timely and validly request exclusion from the Class
23 Settlement in accordance with the terms of the Class Notice and no later than the Response Deadline.

24 **1.28. PAGA PAYMENT**

25 “PAGA Payment” means the penalties pursuant to PAGA that the Parties have agreed is a
26 reasonable sum to be paid in settlement of the PAGA claims included in the Action, which is
27 \$20,000.00. The PAGA Payment is to be approved by the Court pursuant to Labor Code section 2699
28 and is to be distributed as follows: sixty-five percent (65%) (i.e., \$13,000.00) to the LWDA and thirty-

1 five percent (35%) (i.e., \$7,000.00) to the PAGA Settlement Class. Class Counsel shall give timely
2 notice of this Settlement Agreement to the LWDA pursuant to Labor Code section 2699, subdivision
3 (1)(2).

4 **1.29. PAGA PERIOD**

5 “PAGA Period” shall mean the period from July 10, 2023, through the date of preliminary
6 approval of the settlement.

7 **1.30. PAGA SETTLEMENT CLASS**

8 “PAGA Settlement Class” shall mean all individuals who are or were employed by Defendants
9 as non-exempt employees in California during the PAGA Period.

10 **1.31. PARTIES**

11 “Parties” shall mean Plaintiff and Defendant.

12 **1.32. PLAINTIFF**

13 “Plaintiff” shall mean Plaintiff Vicente Jara.

14 **1.33. PRELIMINARY APPROVAL DATE**

15 “Preliminary Approval Date” shall mean the date upon which the Court enters an order
16 preliminarily approving this Settlement Agreement.

17 **1.34. RELEASED CLAIMS**

18 “Released Claims” shall mean those claims arising out of or related to the allegations set forth
19 in the operative complaint and/or PAGA notice to the California Labor and Workforce Development
20 Agency or that could have been raised in the operative complaint and that arose during the Class Period
21 and/or PAGA Period, including claims for: (1) failure to pay minimum wage for all hours worked in
22 violation of Labor Code sections 1194 and 1194.2, and the applicable IWC Wage Order(s); (2) failure
23 to pay proper overtime wages in violation of Labor Code sections 510, 1197, and 1198, and the
24 applicable IWC Wage Order(s); (3) failure to provide compliant rest periods and pay missed rest break
25 premiums in violation of Labor Code section 226.7 and the applicable IWC Wage Order(s); (4) failure
26 to provide compliant meal periods and pay missed meal period premiums in violation of Labor Code
27 sections 226.7 and 512, and the applicable IWC Wage Order(s); (5) failure to maintain accurate
28 employment records in violation of Labor Code section 1174; (6) failure to pay timely wages during

1 employment in violation of Labor Code sections 204, 210; (7) failure to pay all wages due and owing
2 at separation in violation of Labor Code sections 201, 202, and 203; (8) failure to reimburse business
3 expenses in violation of Labor Code sections 2802 and 2804; (9) failure to provide complete and
4 accurate wage statements in violation of Labor Code sections 226 and 226.3; (10) deceptive, fraudulent,
5 or otherwise unlawful business practices based on the foregoing in violation of California’s Unfair
6 Competition Law (Bus. & Prof. Code, §§ 17200–17210);(11) statutory penalties based on the foregoing
7 pursuant to PAGA (Lab. Code, §§ 2698-2699.6); and (12) all claims for liquidated damages, penalties,
8 interest, fees, costs based on the foregoing.

9 No other claims are released other than those claims specifically plead in the Complaint or
10 otherwise specifically identified herein. This Settlement Agreement will not release any person, party,
11 or entity from claims, if any, by Class Members for workers compensation, unemployment, or disability
12 benefits of any nature.

13 **1.35. RELEASED PARTIES**

14 “Released Parties” shall mean Defendant and its parent, subsidiaries, affiliated entities, their
15 predecessors, successors, and their respective former and current shareholders, partners, members,
16 owners, directors, officers, managers, employees, insurers, assigns, agents, and attorneys, including
17 without limitation, Mr. Hautala.

18 **1.36. RELEASING PARTIES**

19 “Releasing Parties” shall mean every Class Participant and all persons purporting to act on their
20 behalf or purporting to assert a claim under or through them, including, but not limited to, their
21 dependents, heirs, assigns, beneficiaries, devisees, legatees, executors, administrators, agents, trustees,
22 conservators, guardians, personal representatives, and successors-in-interest, whether individual, class,
23 representative, legal, equitable, direct or indirect, or any other type or in any other capacity.

24 **1.37. RESPONSE DEADLINE**

25 “Response Deadline” shall mean the date forty-five (45) days following the date on which the
26 Settlement Administrator first mails Class Notice to the Class Members and the last day on which Class
27 Members may submit a request for exclusion and/or objection to Class Settlement.
28

1 **1.38. SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATOR**

2 “Settlement Administrator” shall mean APEX Class Action Administration which the Parties
3 have agreed will be responsible for administration of the Class Settlement and related matters.

4 **1.39. SETTLEMENT CLASS**

5 “Settlement Class” shall mean all individuals who are or were employed by Defendants as non-
6 exempt employees in California during the Class Period. Defendant represents that the Settlement Class
7 consists of approximately 88 Class Members that worked a total of approximately 9,226 workweeks
8 during the Class Period.

9 **1.40. SHARE FORM**

10 “Share Form” shall mean the *Class Action Settlement Share Form*, as set forth in the form of
11 **Exhibit 2** attached hereto, or as otherwise approved by the Court, which is to be mailed to Class
12 Members along with the Class Notice.

13 **2. FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND**

14 **2.1. PLAINTIFF’S CLAIMS**

15 Plaintiff, individually and in his representative capacity on behalf of the Settlement Class, and
16 as a private attorney general on behalf of the State of California, has alleged the following violations:

- 17 **(1)** failure to pay minimum wage for all hours worked in violation of Labor Code sections 1194 and
18 1194.2, and the Applicable Wage Order; **(2)** failure to pay proper overtime wages in violation of Labor
19 Code sections 510, 1197, and 1198, and the Applicable Wage Order; **(3)** failure to provide compliant
20 rest periods and pay missed rest break premiums in violation of Labor Code section 226.7 and the
21 Applicable Wage Order; **(4)** failure to provide compliant meal periods and pay missed meal period
22 premiums in violation of Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512, and the Applicable Wage Order;
23 **(5)** failure to maintain accurate employment records in violation of Labor Code section 1174;
24 **(6)** failure to pay timely wages during employment in violation of Labor Code sections 204, 210;
25 **(7)** failure to pay all wages due and owing at separation in violation of Labor Code sections 201, 202,
26 and 203; **(8)** failure to reimburse business expenses in violation of Labor Code sections 2802 and 2804;
27 **(9)** failure to provide complete and accurate wage statements in violation of Labor Code sections 226
28 and 226.3; **(10)** deceptive, fraudulent, or otherwise unlawful business practices based on the foregoing

1 in violation of California’s Unfair Competition Law (Bus. & Prof. Code, §§ 17200–17210); and
2 **(11)** statutory penalties based on the foregoing pursuant to PAGA (Lab. Code, §§ 2698–2699.6).

3 **2.2. DISCOVERY, INVESTIGATION, RESEARCH, AND MEDIATION**

4 Class Counsel has conducted significant informal discovery during the prosecution of the
5 Action. This discovery, investigation, and prosecution has included, among other things, **(a)** over a
6 dozen telephonic conferences with Plaintiff; **(b)** inspection and analysis of hundreds of pages of
7 documents and other information produced by Plaintiff and Defendant; **(c)** analysis of employment
8 data from a sample of Class Members; **(d)** an analysis of the legal positions taken by Defendant;
9 **(d)** investigation into the viability of class treatment of the claims asserted in the Action; **(e)** analysis
10 of potential class-wide damages, including information sufficient to understand Defendant’s potential
11 defenses to Plaintiff’s claims; **(f)** research of the applicable law with respect to the claims asserted in
12 the Complaint and the potential defenses thereto; and **(g)** assembling and analyzing of data for
13 calculating damages.

14 Class Counsel and the Class Representative have vigorously prosecuted this case, and
15 Defendant has vigorously contested it. The Parties have engaged in sufficient investigation and
16 discovery to assess the relative merits of the claims of the Class Representative and of the defenses to
17 them. After such discovery, investigation, and prosecution, the Parties attended a full-day mediation
18 with an experienced employment law mediator, which culminated in a settlement in principle, the terms
19 of which are elaborated in this Settlement Agreement.

20 **2.3. ALLEGATIONS OF THE CLASS REPRESENTATIVE AND BENEFITS OF**
21 **CLASS SETTLEMENT**

22 The document and data exchange in this matter, as well as discussions between counsel, have
23 been adequate to give the Class Representative and Class Counsel a sound understanding of the merits
24 of their positions and to evaluate the value of the claims of the Settlement Class. The informal discovery
25 conducted in this Action and the information exchanged by the Parties through pre-mediation
26 discussions are sufficient to reliably assess the merits of the Parties’ respective positions and to
27 compromise the issues on a fair and equitable basis.
28

1 The Class Representative and Class Counsel believe that the claims, causes of action,
2 allegations, and contentions asserted in the Action have merit. However, the Class Representative and
3 Class Counsel recognize and acknowledge the expense and delay of continued lengthy proceedings
4 necessary to prosecute the Action against Defendant through trial and through appeals. Class Counsel
5 has taken into account the uncertain outcome of the litigation, the risk of continued litigation in complex
6 actions such as this, as well as the difficulties and delays inherent in such litigation, and the potential
7 difficulty of obtaining certification of the Settlement Class as well as trying the claims of the class.
8 Class Counsel is mindful of the potential problems of proof under, and possible defenses to, the claims
9 alleged in the Action.

10 The Class Representative and Class Counsel believe that the settlement set forth in this
11 Settlement Agreement confers substantial benefits upon Plaintiff and the Settlement Class and that an
12 independent review of this Settlement Agreement by the Court in the approval process will confirm
13 this conclusion. Based on their own independent investigation and evaluation, Class Counsel has
14 determined that the settlement set forth in this Settlement Agreement is in the best interests of Plaintiff
15 and the Class Members.

16 **2.4. DEFENDANT’S DENIALS OF WRONGDOING AND LIABILITY**

17 Defendant has denied and continues to deny all allegations, claims, and contentions alleged by
18 Plaintiff in the Action. Defendant has expressly denied and continues to deny all charges of wrongdoing
19 or liability against it arising out of any of the conduct, statements, acts, or omissions alleged in the
20 Action. Defendant contends that it complied with California and federal wage and hour laws and has
21 dealt legally and fairly with Plaintiff and the Class Members.

22 Defendant further denies that, for any purpose other than settling this Action, these claims are
23 appropriate for class or representative treatment. Nonetheless, Defendant has concluded that further
24 proceedings in the Action would be protracted and expensive and that it is desirable that the Action be
25 fully and finally settled in the manner and upon the terms and conditions set forth in this Settlement
26 Agreement to dispose of burdensome and protracted litigation, to permit the operation of Defendant’s
27 respective businesses without further expensive litigation and the distraction and diversion of their
28 personnel with respect to matters at issue in the Action. Defendant has also taken into account the

1 uncertainty and risks inherent in any litigation, especially in complex cases such as the Action.
2 Defendant has, therefore, determined that it is desirable and beneficial to it that the Action be settled
3 in the manner and upon the terms and conditions set forth in this Settlement Agreement.

4 **2.5. INTENT OF THE CLASS SETTLEMENT**

5 The Class Settlement set forth herein intends to achieve the following: **(1)** entry of an order
6 approving the Class Settlement; **(2)** entry of judgment of the Action; **(3)** discharge of the Released
7 Parties from liability for any and all of the Released Claims; and **(4)** discharge of Defendant from
8 liability for any and all claims arising out of the Action.

9 **3. CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATION OF THE SETTLEMENT CLASS**

10 For the purposes of this Settlement Agreement and the Class Settlement of this Action only, the
11 Parties agree to conditional class certification of the Settlement Class. Defense Counsel believes this
12 conditional certification is appropriate because the Released Claims are being compromised without
13 need to establish the elements of those claims on which liability turns. The certification of the
14 Settlement Class shall not constitute, in this or any other proceeding, an admission of any kind by
15 Defendant, including without limitation, that certification of a class for trial purposes is or would be
16 warranted, appropriate or proper; or that Plaintiff could establish any of the requisite elements for class
17 treatment of any of the claims in the Action.

18 If the Settlement Agreement is not finally approved by the Court, the Effective Date is not
19 achieved, or the Class Settlement is rejected, terminated, or otherwise rendered null and void as set
20 forth herein, then certification of the Settlement Class shall be automatically vacated, shall be void *ab*
21 *initio*, of no force or effect, and shall not constitute evidence or a binding determination that the
22 requirements for certification of a class for trial purposes in this Action or in any other action which
23 have been, are or can be, satisfied. Further, if the Agreement does not reach the Effective Date, Plaintiff
24 agrees that Plaintiff will not argue, claim, reference, or otherwise raise any preliminary approval of the
25 Settlement Class in connection with any later proceeding before the Court.

1 **4. APPOINTMENT OF CLASS COUNSEL**

2 For purposes of this Settlement Agreement and subject to the Court’s approval, the Parties agree
3 to the appointment of Class Counsel as counsel for the Settlement Class and the effectuation of the
4 Class Settlement pursuant to this Settlement Agreement.

5 **5. CONSIDERATION**

6 **5.1. SETTLEMENT AMOUNT**

7 The Parties agree to settle this Action for the Gross Settlement Amount of \$92,260.00. There
8 shall be no reversion to Defendant. Defendant shall pay the Gross Settlement Amount in full. The Gross
9 Settlement Amount and other actions and forbearances taken by Defendant shall constitute adequate
10 consideration for the Class Settlement and will be made in full and final settlement of: the Released
11 Claims, the Class Attorney Fees and Expenses, Administrative Expenses, the Incentive Award, the
12 PAGA Payment (and any payments to individual PAGA Class Members resulting from the PAGA
13 Payment), and any other obligation of Defendant under this Settlement Agreement (other than the
14 Employer’s Taxes on the portion of the Net Settlement Amount allocated to the payment of wages).

15 After the Court issues an order preliminarily approving this Class Settlement, the Settlement
16 Administrator will distribute the Class Notice to the Class Members, which shall describe the terms of
17 the Class Settlement and procedures to Opt Out, object, or participate in the Class Settlement as well
18 as the Share Form, which shall identify the Class Member, the number of workweeks worked by each
19 Class Member (“Workweeks”), as well as the estimated amount of the Individual Settlement Amount
20 the Class Member can expect to receive once the Class Settlement becomes effective on the Effective
21 Date. Class Members shall be given the opportunity to challenge their Workweeks information.

22 **5.2. INCENTIVE AWARD FOR PLAINTIFF**

23 Plaintiff may petition the Court to approve an Incentive Award in an amount up to \$7,500.00
24 for Vicente Jara to acknowledge his efforts on behalf of the Settlement Class in this Action, including
25 assisting in the investigation and consulting with Class Counsel and providing crucial documents to
26 Class Counsel. Defendant shall not oppose any request by Plaintiff for an Incentive Award in such an
27 amount. Any Incentive Award approved by the Court shall be paid to Plaintiff from the Gross
28 Settlement Amount and shall be in addition to any distribution to which he may otherwise be entitled

1 as a Class Participant. Any Incentive Award approved by the Court shall not be considered wages, and
2 the Settlement Administrator shall issue to Plaintiff an IRS Form 1099 reflecting such payment.
3 Plaintiff shall be responsible for the payment of all taxes with respect to any Incentive Award approved
4 by the Court and shall hold Defendant harmless from all liability with regard thereto.

5 **5.3. PAYMENT TO CLASS PARTICIPANTS**

6 Each Class Participant shall be eligible to receive payment of the Individual Settlement
7 Amount, which is a share of the Net Settlement Amount based on the pro rata number of weeks worked
8 by the Class Members during the Class Period as a proportion of all weeks worked by all Class
9 Members. Each Class Participant, including Plaintiff, shall be responsible for the payment of the
10 Employee's Taxes and Required Withholding with respect to his or her Individual Settlement Amount
11 and shall hold Defendant harmless from any and all liability with regard thereto.

12 **5.4. PAYMENT TO PAGA SETTLEMENT CLASS**

13 Each member of the PAGA Settlement Class shall be entitled to receive a portion of the PAGA
14 Payment. The PAGA Payment shall consist of the penalties pursuant to PAGA that the Parties have
15 agreed is a reasonable sum to be paid in settlement of the PAGA claims included in the Action, which
16 is \$20,000.00. The PAGA Payment must be approved by the Court pursuant to Labor Code section
17 2699 and is to be distributed as follows: seventy-five percent (65%) (i.e., \$13,000.00) to the LWDA
18 and twenty-five percent (35%) (i.e., \$7,000.00) to the PAGA Settlement Class. The portion of the
19 PAGA Payment allocated to the PAGA Settlement Class shall be distributed to the PAGA Settlement
20 Class based on the pro rata number of pay periods worked by each particular PAGA Settlement Class
21 member during the PAGA Period as a proportion of all pay periods worked by all members of the
22 PAGA Settlement Class.

23 **5.5. TAX TREATMENT AND PAYMENT**

24 For the purpose of calculating Employee's Taxes and Required Withholding for the Individual
25 Settlement Amounts for Class Participants (including any payments to the Class Representative but
26 exclusive of his Incentive Award), the Parties agree that 15% of each Individual Settlement Amount
27 shall constitute payment in the form of wages (and each Class Participant will be issued an IRS Form
28 W-2 for such payment to him or her), and 85% of each Individual Settlement Amount shall constitute

1 penalties and interest (and each Class Participant will be issued an IRS Form 1099 for such payment
 2 to him or her). Prior to final distribution, the Settlement Administrator shall calculate the total
 3 Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholding due as a result of the wage portion of Class Participants’
 4 anticipated Individual Settlement Amounts and such actual amount will be deducted from the Net
 5 Settlement Amount. Additionally, prior to the funding of the Gross Settlement Amount and final
 6 distribution, the Settlement Administrator shall calculate the total Employer’s Taxes due on the wage
 7 portion of the Class Participants’ Individual Settlement Amounts and issue instructions to Defendant
 8 to separately fund these tax obligations/withholdings. The Parties understand that Plaintiff and the
 9 Class Participants who receive any payment pursuant to this Settlement Agreement shall be solely
 10 responsible for all other individual tax obligations.

11 With respect to the PAGA Payment and any payments made to individual members of the
 12 PAGA Settlement Class, all such payments shall be treated as payments owing for penalties and interest
 13 thereon and shall not be considered wages. The Settlement Administrator shall issue to members of the
 14 PAGA Settlement Class an IRS Form 1099 reflecting such payment. Members of the PAGA Settlement
 15 Class shall be solely responsible for the payment of all taxes with respect to any PAGA payments made
 16 to them.

17 **5.6. NO EFFECT ON EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PLANS**

18 Neither the Class Settlement nor any amounts paid under the Class Settlement will modify any
 19 previously credited hours, days, or weeks of service under any employee benefit plan, policy or bonus
 20 program sponsored by Defendant. Such amounts will not form the basis for additional contributions to,
 21 benefits under, or any other monetary entitlement under Defendant’s sponsored benefit plans, policies,
 22 or bonus programs. The payments made under the terms of this Settlement Agreement shall not be
 23 applied retroactively, currently, or on a going forward basis, as salary, earnings, wages, or any other
 24 form of compensation for the purposes of any of Defendant’s benefit plan, policy, or bonus program.
 25 Defendant retains the right to modify the language of its benefits plans, policies, and bonus programs
 26 to reflect this intent and to make clear that any amounts paid pursuant to this Settlement Agreement are
 27 not for “weeks worked,” “weeks paid,” “weeks of service,” or any similar measuring term as defined
 28 by applicable plans, policies, and bonus programs for purpose of eligibility, vesting, benefit accrual, or

1 any other purpose, and that additional contributions or benefits are not required by this Settlement
2 Agreement. Defendant does not consider the Class Settlement payments “compensation” for purposes
3 of determining eligibility for, or benefit accrual within, any benefit plans, policies, or bonus programs,
4 or any other plan sponsored by Defendant.

5 **5.7. CLASS ATTORNEY FEES AND EXPENSES**

6 As part of the motion for final approval of the Class Settlement, Class Counsel may apply for
7 an award of Class Attorney Fees and Expenses with the fee portion not to exceed one-third of the Gross
8 Settlement Amount (i.e., \$30,753.33) and the award of costs and expenses up to an additional
9 \$15,000.00. Defendant agrees to not object to any such fee, cost, or expense application in those
10 amounts.

11 As a condition of this Class Settlement, Class Counsel has agreed to pursue fees only in the
12 manner reflected by this subsection. Any Class Attorney Fees and Expenses awarded by the Court shall
13 be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount prior to arriving at the Net Settlement Amount and shall
14 not constitute payment to any Class Members. If Class Counsel voluntarily reduces the request for
15 Class Attorney Fees and Expenses or the Court’s award of Class Attorney Fees and Expenses is less
16 than set forth above, the Net Settlement Amount shall be recalculated to reflect the actual Class
17 Attorney Fees and Expenses awarded.

18 The Class Attorney Fees and Expenses approved by the Court shall reflect: **(a)** all work
19 performed and costs and expenses incurred by, or at the direction of, any attorney purporting to
20 represent the Settlement Class through the date of this Settlement Agreement; **(b)** all work to be
21 performed and costs to be incurred in connection with approval by the Court of the Class Settlement;
22 **(c)** all work to be performed and costs and expenses, if any, incurred in connection with administering
23 the Class Settlement through the Effective Date and dismissal of the Action with prejudice; and **(d)** may
24 be based on the “catalyst theory” and/or the “common fund doctrine.”

25 **6. SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION**

26 **6.1. COSTS AND EXPENSES**

27 All costs and expenses due to the Settlement Administrator in connection with its administration
28 of the Class Settlement, including, but not limited to, providing the Class Notice, locating Class

1 Members, processing Opt Out requests and objections, distributing the portion of the PAGA Payment
2 payable to the LWDA, distributing the portion of the PAGA Payment payable to the members of the
3 PAGA Settlement Class, and calculating, administering and distributing Individual Settlement
4 Amounts to the Class Participants and related tax forms, shall be paid from the Gross Settlement
5 Amount, and is not expected to exceed \$10,000.00.

6 **6.2. PAYMENT BY DEFENDANT**

7 Defendant shall deposit the Gross Settlement Amount in a lump sum payment plus the
8 employer-side payroll taxes to the Settlement Administrator within seven (7) days of the Effective
9 Date. In no event shall Defendant be obligated to pay or deposit with the Settlement Administrator
10 more than \$92,260.00 plus the Employer's Taxes, except where the Escalator Provision is triggered.

11 **7. NOTICE TO CLASS MEMBERS AND CLAIMS ADMINISTRATION PROCESS**

12 **7.1. THE SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATOR**

13 The Settlement Administrator will be responsible for: mailing the Class Notice and Share Form
14 (**Exhibit 1** and **Exhibit 2**, respectively) to Class Members; posting notice of entry of final order and
15 judgment certifying the Class Settlement and approving this Settlement Agreement; handling inquiries
16 from Class Members concerning the Class Notice; determining Individual Settlement Amounts;
17 determining individual payments to members of the PAGA Settlement Class; maintaining the
18 settlement funds in an appropriate interest-bearing account; preparing, administering, and distributing
19 Individual Settlement Amounts to Class Participants; preparing, administering, and distributing
20 individual payments to members of the PAGA Settlement Class; distributing the portion of the PAGA
21 Payment payable to the LWDA; issuing a final report and performing such other duties as the Parties
22 may direct. Additionally, the Settlement Administrator will handle all tax document preparation and
23 reporting, including state and federal tax forms, if any.

24 On a weekly basis, the Settlement Administrator will provide reports to Class Counsel and
25 Defense Counsel with summary information updating them as to the number of validated and timely
26 objections and Opt Out requests. The Settlement Administrator will serve on Class Counsel and
27 Defense Counsel via e-mail date-stamped copies of the original Opt Out requests and objections no
28 later than seven (7) days after their receipt. The Settlement Administrator will provide Class Counsel

1 with proof of mailing of the Class Notice, without listing individual Class Member names which the
2 Settlement Administrator will file with the Court at the time Class Counsel files its motion in support
3 of the Court’s Final Approval and Fairness Hearing.

4 No later than thirty (30) days prior to the Final Approval and Fairness Hearing, the Settlement
5 Administrator will compile and deliver to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel a report with summary
6 information regarding: **(a)** the total amount of final Individual Settlement Amounts of each Class
7 Participant, without any identifying personal information; **(b)** the number of Class Participants to
8 receive such payments, and **(c)** the final number of Opt-Outs and objections.

9 Administrative Expenses are not anticipated to exceed \$10,000.00. Prior to the calculation and
10 distribution of the Individual Settlement Amounts, the Settlement Administrator shall calculate the
11 total Administrative Expenses through the conclusion of their services and such actual amount will be
12 deducted from the Gross Settlement Amount prior to the final calculation of the Individual Settlement
13 Amounts.

14 **7.2. NOTICE TO CLASS MEMBERS**

15 Notice shall be provided to Class Members in the following manner: Within twenty-eight (28)
16 days after the Preliminary Approval Date, Defendant shall provide the Settlement Administrator with
17 an updated list of Class Members and members of the PAGA Settlement Class containing names, social
18 security numbers, dates of employment, the workweeks actually worked by Class Members, last-
19 known addresses, and phone numbers (the “Database”). The Database shall be marked
20 “Confidential – Settlement Administrator’s Eyes Only.” Class Counsel shall not receive a copy of this
21 list.

22 Within twenty-eight (28) days following the Preliminary Approval Date, the Settlement
23 Administrator shall determine the number of workweeks worked by each Class Member, but may not
24 do so by counting all weeks between the date of hire and the date of termination. Instead the Settlement
25 Administrator must count the workweeks actually worked by the Class Member and exclude workweeks
26 where the Defendant was not operating or where the Class Member was not working. The Settlement
27 Administrator shall populate the workweek data for each Class Member, and send each Class Member
28 the Class Notice via first-class, United States mail. The Class Notice shall also contain an easily-

1 understood statement alerting the Class Members that, unless they elect to Opt Out of the Class
 2 Settlement, the Class Member is releasing and waiving all Released Claims against the Released
 3 Parties.

4 The Class Notice will inform Class Members of their estimated share of the settlement and the
 5 number of workweeks they worked during the Class Period. Class Members may dispute their
 6 workweeks if they believe they worked more weeks in the Class Period than Defendant’s records show
 7 by submitting information to the Settlement Administrator no later than forty-five (45) days after being
 8 mailed the Class Notice and Share Form by the Settlement Administrator, which is the defined
 9 Response Deadline. The Settlement Administrator will jointly work with Plaintiff and Defendant to
 10 resolve the dispute in good faith. If Plaintiff and Defendant cannot agree over the workweeks to be
 11 credited, the Settlement Administrator shall make the final decision based on the information presented
 12 by the Class Member and Defendant.

13 **7.3. OPT OUT PROCEDURE**

14 Class Members who do not timely Opt Out of the Class Settlement will be deemed to participate
 15 in the Class Settlement and shall become Class Participants without having to submit a claim form or
 16 take any other action. To Opt Out of the Class Settlement, the Class Member must submit a letter or
 17 postcard to the Settlement Administrator by the Response Deadline. The Opt Out request must state
 18 the Class Member’s name, address, telephone number, and signature. The Opt Out request should state
 19 something to the effect of:

20 “I WISH TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE SETTLEMENT CLASS IN THE *VICENTE*
 21 *JARA V. H & M LOGGING, INC.* LAWSUIT. I UNDERSTAND THAT IF I ASK TO
 22 BE EXCLUDED FROM THE SETTLEMENT CLASS, I WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY
 23 MONEY FROM THE CLASS SETTLEMENT OF THIS LAWSUIT AND WILL NOT
 24 BE RELEASING ANY CLAIMS I MIGHT HAVE.”

25
 26 Any Opt Out request that is not postmarked by the Response Deadline will be invalid. If prior
 27 to the Response Deadline any Class Notice mailed to a Class Member is returned as having been
 28 undelivered by the United States Postal Service, the Settlement Administrator shall perform a skip trace

1 search and seek an address correction for such Class Members, and a second Class Notice will be sent
 2 to any new or different address obtained.

3 It will be presumed that, if an envelope containing the Class Notice has not been returned within
 4 thirty (30) days of the mailing, the Class Member received the Class Notice. At least twenty-one (21)
 5 days prior to the Final Approval and Fairness Hearing, the Settlement Administrator shall provide Class
 6 Counsel and Defense Counsel with a Declaration of Due Diligence and Proof of Mailing with regard
 7 to the mailing of the Class Notice and its attempts to locate Class Members. The declaration shall
 8 specify the number of Class Members to whom the Class Notice was sent and the number of Class
 9 Members to whom the Class Notice was not delivered, as well as information relating to the number
 10 of Opt-Outs and objectors. Class Counsel shall file this declaration with the Court.

11 If the Settlement Administrator determines that an Opt Out request returned by a Class Member
 12 before the Response Deadline is deficient, then the Settlement Administrator shall mail a deficiency
 13 letter to that Class Member identifying the problem. If a Class Member submits both a dispute and an
 14 Opt Out request, the Settlement Administrator shall make reasonable attempts to clarify as if the Opt
 15 Out request were deficient. If the Class Member fails to cure the deficiency, the Opt Out request shall
 16 be disregarded and the claim will be paid, and the Class Member will become bound by the judgment.

17 Class Participants will be bound by the Release of Released Claims set forth in the definition
 18 of “Released Claims” provided in this Settlement Agreement.

19 A request to Opt Out of the Class Settlement shall *not* serve to exclude the Class Member from
 20 participation in the PAGA Settlement Class. Opt-Outs shall still be entitled to their share of the PAGA
 21 Payment. Class Members who are also members of the PAGA Settlement Class shall have no right or
 22 ability to opt out of the portion of this Settlement Agreement releasing PAGA claims.

23 **7.4. OBJECTION PROCEDURE**

24 The Class Notice shall inform the Class Members of their right to object to the Class Settlement
 25 if they do not Opt Out. Any Class Participants who wish to object to the Class Settlement may submit
 26 a written objection to the Settlement Administrator no later than the Response Deadline. Only Class
 27 Participants may object to the Settlement. The objection should include the case name and number and
 28 must set forth, in clear and concise terms, a statement of the reasons why the objector believes that the

1 Court should find that the proposed Class Settlement is not in the best interest of the Settlement Class
2 and the reasons why the Class Settlement should not be approved, including the legal and factual
3 arguments supporting the objection. If an objector also wishes to appear at the Final Approval and
4 Fairness Hearing, in person or through an attorney, they may do so. The Settlement Administrator will
5 promptly serve copies of any objection or notice of intention to appear on Class Counsel and Defense
6 Counsel. Class Members wishing to make an objection may appear at the Final Approval and Fairness
7 Hearing, either in person or through a lawyer retained at their own expense.

8 **7.5. NOTICE OF FINAL JUDGMENT**

9 Within seven (7) days after the Court has held a Final and Fairness Approval Hearing and
10 entered a final order certifying the Class for settlement purposes only and approving the Class
11 Settlement, the Settlement Administrator will give notice of judgment to Class Members pursuant to
12 rule 3.771(b) of the California Rules of Court, by posting a copy of said order and final judgment on
13 its website at a web address to be included in the Class Notice.

14 **8. CLASS SETTLEMENT FUNDING AND DISTRIBUTION**

15 **8.1. ALLOCATION OF THE GROSS SETTLEMENT AMOUNT**

16 The claims of all Class Members are settled for the Gross Settlement Amount of \$92,260.00,
17 which will be allocated as follows:

- 18 1. The Administrative Expenses, estimated not to exceed \$10,000.00;
- 19 2. Class Counsel's attorney fees not to exceed \$30,753.33;
- 20 3. Class Counsel's litigation costs and expenses not to exceed \$15,000.00;
- 21 4. The Incentive Award, not to exceed \$7,500.00; and
- 22 5. PAGA Payment to LWDA of \$15,000.00.

23 For purposes of calculating the estimated Individual Settlement Amounts, the Settlement
24 Administrator shall calculate the estimated Net Settlement Amount based on the estimated values
25 provided above prior to sending Notice to the Class Members. Prior to final distribution, the Settlement
26 Administrator shall recalculate the final Net Settlement Amount based on the actual values of the
27 amounts in each category.

1 **8.2. CALCULATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT AMOUNTS FOR**
2 **CLASS PARTICIPANTS**

3 Individual Settlement Amounts to be paid to Class Participants shall be paid from the Net
4 Settlement Amount. The portion of the Net Settlement Amount shall be distributed pro rata on a
5 “checks cashed” basis based on the proportional number of weeks worked by each Class Member
6 during the Class Period.

7 Defendant will provide the Settlement Administrator with any information reasonably
8 necessary to perform the calculation of number of workweeks for each Class Member, and any other
9 reasonably required information the Settlement Administrator requests to perform the calculations
10 required under this Settlement Agreement. Defendant shall have no responsibility for deciding the
11 validity of the Individual Settlement Amounts or any other payments made pursuant to this Settlement
12 Agreement, shall have no involvement in or responsibility for the determination or payment of
13 Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholding, and shall have no liability for any errors made with
14 respect to such Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholding. Although the Settlement Administrator
15 will calculate and pay the standard Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholding on the portion of the
16 Individual Settlement Amounts constituting wages on their behalf, Plaintiff and Class Participants
17 represent and understand that they shall be solely responsible for any and all tax obligation associated
18 with their respective Individual Settlement Amounts and Incentive Awards.

19 **8.3. CALCULATION OF THE PAYMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF**
20 **THE PAGA SETTLEMENT CLASS**

21 Each member of the PAGA Settlement Class shall be entitled to receive a portion of the PAGA
22 Payment. The PAGA Payment shall consist of the penalties pursuant to PAGA that the Parties have
23 agreed is a reasonable sum to be paid in settlement of the PAGA claims included in the Action, which
24 is \$20,000.00. The PAGA Payment is to be approved by the Court pursuant to Labor Code section
25 2699 and is to be distributed as follows: sixty-five percent (65%) (i.e., \$13,000.00) to the LWDA and
26 thirty-five percent (35%) (i.e., \$7,000.00) to the PAGA Settlement Class.

27 The portion of the PAGA Payment allocated to the PAGA Settlement Class shall be distributed
28 to the PAGA Settlement Class based on the pro rata number of pay periods worked by each particular

1 PAGA Settlement Class member during the PAGA Period as a proportion of all pay periods worked
2 by all PAGA Settlement Class members during the PAGA Period. Each member of the PAGA
3 Settlement Class, including Plaintiff, shall be responsible for the payment of the Employee's Taxes and
4 Required Withholding with respect to their share of the PAGA Payment and shall hold Defendant
5 harmless from any and all liability with regard thereto.

6 Defendant will provide the Settlement Administrator with any information reasonably
7 necessary to perform the calculation of number of pay periods worked for each PAGA Settlement Class
8 member, and any other reasonably required information the Settlement Administrator requests to
9 perform the calculations required under this Settlement Agreement. Defendant shall have no
10 responsibility for deciding the validity of the individual payment amounts allocated to each member of
11 the PAGA Settlement Class or any other payments made pursuant to this Settlement Agreement, shall
12 have no involvement in or responsibility for the determination or payment of Employee's Taxes and
13 Required Withholding, and shall have no liability for any errors made with respect to such Employee's
14 Taxes and Required Withholding.

15 The members of the PAGA Settlement Class shall be solely responsible for any and all tax
16 obligation associated with their respective shares of the PAGA Payment.

17 **8.4. TIME FOR PAYMENT OF ATTORNEY FEES AND EXPENSES**

18 The Settlement Administrator shall distribute to Class Counsel any attorney fees and expenses
19 approved by the Court no later than fourteen (14) days after the Effective Date.

20 **8.5. TIME FOR PAYMENT OF INCENTIVE AWARD**

21 The Settlement Administrator shall distribute to Plaintiff the Incentive Award approved by the
22 Court no later than fourteen (14) days after the Effective Date.

23 **8.6. TIME FOR PAYMENT OF PAGA PAYMENT TO THE LWDA**

24 The Settlement Administrator shall distribute to the LWDA the portion of the PAGA Payment
25 due to it and approved by the Court no later than fourteen (14) days after the Effective Date.

26

27

28

8.7. TIME FOR PAYMENT OF TAXES AND REQUIRED WITHHOLDING AND INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT AMOUNTS

The Settlement Administrator shall make every effort to pay the Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholding associated with each Class Participant’s Individual Settlement Amount and mail the Individual Settlement Amount to each Class Participant, by first-class United States mail, to the last-known address no later than fourteen (14) days after the Effective Date. If the Settlement Administrator is not able to do so within the time period set forth above, it shall so inform Class Counsel and Defense Counsel and provide an approximate date by which the Employee’s Taxes and Required Withholding shall be paid and the Individual Settlement Amounts will be mailed. Under no circumstances shall the Settlement Administrator distribute checks to Class Participants until all Individual Settlement Amounts have been considered, calculated, and accounted for, and all of the remaining monetary obligations have been calculated and accounted for.

Within two hundred ten (210) days of mailing the Individual Settlement Amounts to Class Participants, the Settlement Administrator shall file with the Court and provide to Class Counsel a declaration of payment. If any Class Participant is deceased, payment shall be made payable to the estate of that Class Member and delivered to the executor or administrator of that estate, unless the Settlement Administrator has received an affidavit or declaration pursuant to California Probate Code section 13101, in which case payment shall be made to the affiant(s) or declarant(s).

8.8. NON-CASHED SETTLEMENT CHECKS

Any funds associated with checks that have not been cashed within one hundred eighty (180) days, will become void and the Individual Settlement Amount associated with the uncashed check will be remitted pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 384 to the California State Controller for deposit in the Unclaimed Property Fund in the name of the individual whose check was uncashed. The Parties agree that this disposition results in no “unpaid residue” within the meaning of California Civil Procedure Code section 384, as the entire Net Settlement Amount will be paid out to Class Participants, whether or not they all cash their Individual Settlement Amount checks. Therefore, Defendant shall not be required to pay any interest on said amount. For the purposes of determining whether Defendant has met their financial obligation to pay the Individual Settlement Payment, Defendant will be deemed to

1 have fulfilled its obligation upon the mailing of the check to the Class Member, regardless of whether
2 such Class Member subsequently negotiates the check.

3 **8.9. DISPUTES REGARDING CLASS MEMBER WORKWEEKS DATA OR**
4 **PAYMENT OF INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT SHARES**

5 Class Member Workweeks and the corresponding Individual Settlement Amount shall be
6 calculated using the employment and payroll records of Defendant, which presumptively shall be
7 deemed to be full, complete, and accurate for purposes of this Settlement Agreement. To overcome
8 that presumption, any Class Member objecting to the accuracy of the number of Workweeks or amount
9 of the Individual Settlement Amount must submit documentary evidence, such as pay stubs or other
10 written employment records, to the Settlement Administrator. Each Class Member may dispute the
11 number of Workweeks or their estimated Individual Settlement Amount contained on their Class
12 Notice (“Workweeks Dispute”). Any such Workweeks Dispute must be mailed or faxed to the
13 Settlement Administrator by the Class Member, postmarked or fax-stamped on or before the Response
14 Deadline. The Settlement Administrator shall immediately provide copies of all disputes to counsel for
15 Defendant, shall inform Class Counsel of the dispute without disclosing the identity of the Class
16 Member making the dispute, and shall immediately attempt to resolve all such disputes directly with
17 relevant Class Members with the assistance of Defendant, Defense Counsel, and Class Counsel. If the
18 dispute cannot be resolved, it shall be submitted to the Settlement Administrator for its final, non-
19 appealable decision. The Settlement Administrator shall use its best efforts to resolve all such disputes
20 prior to the Effective Date. If, however, a dispute arises or is not resolved until after the Settlement
21 Amount has been distributed, the initial calculation shall stand (as Defendant shall be under no
22 obligation to pay any amounts in excess of the Gross Settlement Amount under this Settlement
23 Agreement).

24 **9. NULLIFICATION OF THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

25 **9.1. NON-APPROVAL OF THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

26 The Class Settlement and conditional class certification shall be considered null and void, and
27 neither the Class Settlement, conditional class certification, nor any of the related negotiations or
28 proceedings, shall be of any force or effect, and all Parties to the Class Settlement shall stand in the

1 same position, without prejudice, as if the Class Settlement had been neither entered into nor filed with
2 the Court, if any of the following occur: **(a)** the Court should for any reason fail to approve this
3 Settlement Agreement in the form agreed to by the Parties; **(b)** the Court should for any reason fail to
4 enter a judgment with prejudice of the Action, or **(c)** the approval of the Class Settlement and judgment
5 is reversed, modified, or declared or rendered void. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Parties may
6 attempt in good faith to cure any perceived defects in this Settlement Agreement to facilitate approval.

7 **9.2. PARTIES' RIGHTS TO VOID CLASS SETTLEMENT; ESCALATOR**
8 **PROVISION**

9 If 10% or more members of the Settlement Class timely submit Opt Out requests, Defendant(s)
10 shall have the right (but not the obligation) to void the settlement described in this Agreement. If the
11 number of workweeks worked by the Class Members is greater than 40% above that estimated by
12 Defendant(s), then the GSA shall be increased by \$8.00 per workweek for each additional Workweek
13 above the 40% buffer.

14 **9.3. INVALIDATION**

15 Invalidation of any material portion of this Settlement Agreement shall invalidate the Class
16 Settlement in its entirety, unless the Parties subsequently agree in writing that the remaining provisions
17 of the Class Settlement are to remain in full force and effect.

18 **9.4. STAY ON APPEAL**

19 If a timely appeal from the approval of the Class Settlement and judgment, the judgment shall
20 be stayed, and Defendant shall not be obligated to fund the Gross Settlement Amount or take any other
21 actions required by this Settlement Agreement until all appeal rights have been exhausted by operation
22 of law.

23 **10. MOTIONS FOR COURT APPROVAL**

24 **10.1. PRELIMINARY APPROVAL**

25 As soon as practicable after execution of this Settlement Agreement, Class Counsel will submit
26 this Settlement Agreement to the Court along with a Motion for Preliminary Approval of the Class
27 Settlement. Each party shall cooperate to present the Class Settlement to the Court for preliminary
28 approval in a timely fashion.

1 **10.2. FINAL APPROVAL**

2 The Final Approval and Fairness Hearing shall be held before the Court. At the Final Approval
3 and Fairness Hearing, Plaintiff shall move the Court for the entry of the final order certifying the
4 Settlement Class for settlement purposes only and approving the Class Settlement as being fair,
5 reasonable, and adequate to the Class Participants within the meaning of California Rules of Court,
6 Rule 3.769, subdivisions (c), (d) and (e), and for the entry of a final judgment of the Action consistent
7 with the terms of the Class Settlement and rule 3.769, subdivision (h), of the California Rules of Court.
8 Class Counsel and Defense Counsel shall submit to the Court such pleadings and/or evidence as may
9 be required for the Court’s determination.

10 **11. RELEASES AND WAIVERS**

11 **11.1. RELEASE OF CLAIMS BY THE SETTLEMENT CLASS**

12 Upon the Effective Date, the Releasing Parties shall be deemed to each release the Released
13 Parties, and each of them, of and from any and all Released Claims arising during the Class Period. It
14 is the desire of the Parties and the Releasing Parties to fully, finally, and forever settle, compromise,
15 and discharge the Released Claims. Each of the Releasing Parties, including each Class Participant,
16 will be bound by the release of Released Claims as a result of the Class Settlement and to the terms of
17 the final judgment and the satisfaction of such judgment.

18 Class Participants will be deemed to have acknowledged and agreed that their claims for wages
19 and/or penalties in the Action are disputed, and that their Individual Settlement Amount constitutes
20 payment of all sums allegedly due to them. Class Participants will be deemed to have acknowledged
21 and agreed that California Labor Code section 206.5 is not applicable to the Individual Settlement
22 Amount. That section provides in pertinent part as follows:

1 “An employer shall not require the execution of a release of a claim or right on account
2 of wages due, or to become due, or made as an advance on wages to be earned, unless
3 payment of those wages has been made.”

4 **11.2. RELEASE OF CLAIMS BY PLAINTIFF**

5 Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and his dependents, heirs and assigns, beneficiaries, devisees,
6 legatees, executors, administrators, agents, trustees, conservators, guardians, personal representatives,
7 and successors-in-interest, whether individual, class, representative, legal, equitable, direct or indirect,
8 or any other type or in any other capacity, shall and does hereby forever release, discharge and agree
9 to hold harmless the Released Parties from any and all charges, complaints, claims, liabilities,
10 obligations, promises, agreements, controversies, damages, actions, causes of action, suits, rights,
11 demands, costs, losses, debts and expenses (including attorney fees and costs), known or unknown, at
12 law or in equity, which he may now have or may have after the signing of this Settlement Agreement,
13 arising out of or in any way connected with his employment with Defendant including, the Released
14 Claims, claims that were asserted or could have been asserted in the Complaint, and any and all
15 transactions, occurrences, or matters between the Parties occurring prior to the date this Settlement
16 Agreement is fully executed. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, this release shall include,
17 but not be limited to, any and all claims under: **(a)** the Americans with Disabilities Act; **(b)** Title VII
18 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; **(c)** the Civil Rights Act of 1991; **(d)** 42 U.S.C. § 1981; **(e)** the Age
19 Discrimination in Employment Act; **(f)** the Fair Labor Standards Act; **(g)** the Equal Pay Act; **(h)** the
20 Employee Retirement Income Security Act, as amended; **(i)** the Consolidated Omnibus Budget
21 Reconciliation Act; **(j)** the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; **(k)** the Family and Medical Leave Act; **(l)** the
22 Civil Rights Act of 1966; **(m)** the California Fair Employment and Housing Act; **(n)** the California
23 Constitution; **(o)** the California Labor Code; **(p)** the California Government Code; **(q)** the California
24 Civil Code; and **(r)** any and all other federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, regulations, rules,
25 and other laws, and any and all claims based on constitutional, statutory, common law, or regulatory
26 grounds as well as any other claims based on theories of wrongful or constructive discharge, breach of
27 contract or implied contract, fraud, misrepresentation, promissory estoppel, or intentional infliction of
28

1 emotional distress, negligent infliction of emotional distress, or damages under any other federal, state,
2 or local statutes, ordinances, regulations, rules, or laws. This release is for any and all relief, no matter
3 how denominated, including, but not limited to, back pay, front pay, vacation pay, bonuses,
4 compensatory damages, tortious damages, liquidated damages, punitive damages, damages for pain
5 and suffering, and attorney fees and costs, and Plaintiff hereby forever releases, discharges and agrees
6 to hold harmless Defendant and the Released Parties from any and all claims for attorney fees and costs
7 arising out of the matters released in this Settlement Agreement.

8 Plaintiff specifically acknowledges that he is aware of and familiar with the provisions of
9 California Civil Code section 1542, which provides as follows:

10 “A general release does not extend to claims that the creditor or releasing party does not
11 know or suspect to exist in his or her favor at the time of executing the release and that,
12 if known by him or her, would have materially affected his or her settlement with the
13 debtor or released party.”
14

15 Plaintiff, being aware of California Civil Code section 1542, hereby expressly waives and
16 relinquishes all rights and benefits he may have under section 1542 as well as any other statutes or
17 common law principles of a similar effect. Plaintiff may hereafter discover facts in addition to or
18 different from those which he now knows or believes to be true with respect to the subject matter of all
19 the claims referenced herein, but agrees that, upon the Effective Date, Plaintiff shall and hereby does
20 fully, finally, and forever settle and release any and all claims against the Released Parties, known or
21 unknown, suspected or unsuspected, contingent or non-contingent, that were asserted or could have
22 been asserted upon any theory of law or equity without regard to the subsequent discovery of existence
23 of such different or additional facts.

24 **11.3. CIRCULAR 230 DISCLAIMER**

25 Each party to this Settlement Agreement (for purposes of this section, the “Acknowledging
26 Party”; and each party to this Agreement other than the Acknowledging Party, an “Other Party”)
27 acknowledges and agrees that **(1)** no provision of this Settlement Agreement, and no written
28 communication or disclosure between or among the parties or their attorneys and other advisers, is or

1 was intended to be, nor shall any such communication or disclosure constitute or be construed or be
 2 relied upon as, tax advice within the meaning of United States Treasury Department Circular 230 (31
 3 C.F.R. Part 10); (2) the Acknowledging Party (a) has relied exclusively upon her or its own
 4 independent legal and tax advisers for advice (including tax advice) in connection with this Settlement
 5 Agreement, (b) has not entered into this Settlement Agreement based upon the recommendation of any
 6 other party or any attorney or advisor to any other party, and (c) is not entitled to rely upon any
 7 communication or disclosure by any attorney or advisor to any other party to avoid any tax penalty that
 8 may be imposed on the Acknowledging Party; and (3) no attorney or advisor to any other party has
 9 imposed any limitation that protects the confidentiality of any such attorney’s or adviser’s tax strategies
 10 (regardless of whether such limitation is legally binding) upon disclosure by the Acknowledging Party
 11 of the tax treatment or tax structure of any transaction, including any transaction contemplated by this
 12 Settlement Agreement.

13 **12. DUTIES OF THE PARTIES**

14 **12.1. MUTUAL FULL COOPERATION**

15 The Parties agree to cooperate fully with one another to accomplish and implement the terms
 16 of this Settlement Agreement. Such cooperation shall include, but not be limited to, execution of such
 17 other documents and the taking of such other actions as may reasonably be necessary to fulfill the terms
 18 of this Settlement Agreement. The Parties shall use their best efforts, including all efforts contemplated
 19 by this Settlement Agreement and any other efforts that may become necessary by court order or
 20 otherwise, to effectuate this Settlement Agreement and the terms set forth herein. As soon as practicable
 21 after execution of this Settlement Agreement, Class Counsel, with the cooperation of Defendant and
 22 Defense Counsel, shall take all necessary and reasonable steps to secure the Court’s final approval of
 23 this Settlement Agreement.

24 **12.2. DUTY TO SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE CLASS SETTLEMENT**

25 The Parties agree to abide by all of the terms of this Settlement Agreement in good faith and to
 26 support the Class Settlement fully and to use their best efforts to defend this Class Settlement from any
 27 legal challenge, whether by appeal or collateral attack.
 28

1 **12.3. DUTIES PRIOR TO COURT APPROVAL**

2 Class Counsel shall promptly submit this Settlement Agreement to the Court for preliminary
3 approval and determination by the Court as to its fairness, adequacy, and reasonableness. Promptly
4 upon execution of this Settlement Agreement, Class Counsel shall apply to the Court for the entry of a
5 preliminary order scheduling a hearing on the question of whether the proposed Class Settlement
6 should be approved as fair, reasonable, and adequate as to the Class Members, approving as to form
7 and content the proposed Class Notice and Share Form attached hereto as **Exhibit 1** and **Exhibit 2**,
8 respectively, and directing the mailing of the Class Notice to Class Members. While Defendant can
9 reserve its right to object to facts or assertions made in the moving papers, Defense Counsel shall file
10 a notice of non-opposition to the granting of the motion for preliminary approval or join in the motion.

11 **13. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

12 **13.1. VOIDING THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

13 Pending Court approval and other than as provided herein, if any of the conditions set forth in
14 this Settlement Agreement are not met and satisfied, this Settlement Agreement may, at the option of
15 either Plaintiff or Defendant, be ineffective, void, and of no further force and effect, and may not be
16 used or be admissible in any subsequent proceeding, either in this Court or in any other court or forum.
17 If either Party decides to void the Settlement Agreement, then the Settlement Agreement and
18 conditional class certification shall be considered void, and neither the Settlement Agreement,
19 conditional class certification, nor any of the related negotiations or proceedings, shall be of any force
20 or effect, and the Parties shall stand in the same position, without prejudice, as if this Settlement
21 Agreement had been neither entered into nor filed with the Court. Should any Party choose to void the
22 Class Settlement under this subsection, such Party shall be responsible for all Settlement Administrator
23 fees and costs actually incurred.

24 **13.2. DIFFERENT FACTS**

25 The Parties acknowledge that, except for matters expressly represented herein, the facts in
26 relation to the dispute and all claims released by the terms of this Settlement Agreement may turn out
27 to be different from the facts now known by each party and/or its counsel, or believed by such Party or
28 counsel to be true, and each Party therefore expressly assumes the risk of the existence of different or

1 presently unknown facts, and agrees that this Settlement Agreement shall be in all respects effective
2 and binding despite such difference.

3 **13.3. NO PRIOR ASSIGNMENTS**

4 The Parties represent, covenant, and warrant that they have not directly or indirectly assigned,
5 transferred, encumbered, or purported to assign, transfer, or encumber to any person or entity any
6 portion of any liability, claim, demand, action, cause of action, or right herein released and discharged
7 except as set forth herein.

8 **13.4. NON-ADMISSION**

9 Nothing in this Settlement Agreement shall be construed as or deemed to be an admission by
10 any Party of any liability, culpability, negligence, or wrongdoing toward any other Party, or any other
11 person, and the Parties specifically disclaim any liability, culpability, negligence, or wrongdoing
12 toward each other or any other person. Each of the Parties has entered into this Settlement Agreement
13 with the intention to avoid further disputes and litigation with the attendant inconvenience, expenses,
14 and contingencies. Nothing herein shall constitute any admission by Defendant of wrongdoing or
15 liability, or of the truth of any factual allegations in the Action. Nothing herein shall constitute any
16 admission by Defendant regarding the merits of the Claims in this Action, including but not limited to
17 claims for unpaid wages or violations under California or federal law. Nothing herein shall constitute
18 an admission by Defendant that the Action was properly brought as a class or representative action
19 other than for settlement purposes. To the contrary, Defendant has denied and continues to deny each
20 and every material factual allegation and all Claims. To this end, the Class Settlement of the Action,
21 the negotiation and execution of this Settlement Agreement, and all acts performed or documents
22 executed pursuant to or in furtherance of this Settlement Agreement or the Class Settlement are not,
23 shall not be deemed to be, and may not be used as, an admission or evidence of any wrongdoing or
24 liability on the part of Defendant or of the truth of any of the factual allegations in the Complaint in the
25 Action; and are not, shall not be deemed to be, and may not be used as, an admission or evidence of
26 any fault or omission on the part of Defendant in any civil, criminal, or administrative proceeding in
27 any court, administrative agency, or other tribunal.
28

1 **13.5. NON-EVIDENTIARY USE**

2 Neither this Agreement nor any of its terms, nor any statements or conduct in the negotiation
3 or drafting of it, shall be offered or used as evidence by Plaintiff, any Class Member (including any
4 individual who requested to be excluded from the Settlement Class), Defendant, or its, her, his, or their
5 respective counsel, in the Action, except as is reasonably necessary to effectuate the Settlement
6 Agreement’s purpose and terms. This Settlement Agreement may, however, be used by Defendant and
7 the Released Parties to prove or defend against any claim released herein by any Class Member in any
8 judicial, quasi-judicial, administrative, or governmental proceeding.

9 **13.6. MEDIA OR PRESS**

10 Plaintiff and Defendant, and their respective counsel, recognize, accept, and agree that the
11 Parties to this Settlement Agreement desire that the terms of this Settlement Agreement, the fact of the
12 Class Settlement embodied in this Settlement Agreement, the disposition of the Action, the Action, and
13 all matters relating to the litigation of the Action, including discovery proceedings therein, and evidence
14 obtained during the course of the Action, shall not be discussed with or presented to the media or press.

15 **13.7. NON-RETALIATION**

16 Defendant understands and acknowledges that it has a legal obligation to not retaliate against
17 any Class Member who elects to participate in the Class Settlement or elects to Opt Out of the Class
18 Settlement. Defendant will refer any inquiries regarding this Class Settlement to the Settlement
19 Administrator or Class Counsel and will not discourage Class Members who are employees, directly
20 or indirectly, from making claims, opting out, or objecting to the Class Settlement. None of the Parties,
21 or their respective attorneys or agents, shall solicit or encourage any Class Members, directly or
22 indirectly, to Opt Out of the Class Settlement.

23 **13.8. CONSTRUCTION**

24 The Parties agree that the terms and conditions of this Settlement Agreement are the result of
25 lengthy, intensive, arms-length, non-collusive negotiations between the Parties and that this Settlement
26 Agreement is not to be construed in favor of or against any party by reason of the extent to which any
27 party or its counsel participated in the drafting of this Settlement Agreement. If any of the dates in this
28

1 Settlement Agreement fall on a weekend, bank or court holiday, the time to act shall be extended to the
2 next business day.

3 **13.9. GOVERNING LAW**

4 This Settlement Agreement is intended to and shall be governed by the laws of the State of
5 California, without regard to conflict of law principles, in all respects, including execution,
6 interpretation, performance, and enforcement.

7 **13.10. NOTICES**

8 Except for Class Member notices required to be made by the Settlement Administrator, all
9 notices or other communications required or permitted under this Settlement Agreement shall be in
10 writing and shall be sufficiently given if delivered in person to the party or their counsel by U.S.
11 certified mail, postage prepaid, e-mail, facsimile, or overnight delivery addressed to the address of the
12 party appearing in this Settlement Agreement.

13 **13.11. CAPTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

14 Section titles or captions contained herein are inserted as a matter of convenience and for
15 reference only and in no way define, limit, extend, or describe the scope of this Settlement Agreement
16 or any provision thereof.

17 **13.12. MODIFICATION**

18 This Settlement Agreement may not be changed, altered, or modified, except in writing signed
19 by the Parties or the Parties' counsel on their behalf. If preliminary or final approval of this Settlement
20 Agreement has been granted by the Court, then any such amendments or modifications to this
21 Settlement Agreement shall be approved by the Court. This Settlement Agreement may not be
22 discharged except by performance in accordance with its terms or by a writing signed by the Parties.

23 **13.13. INTEGRATION CLAUSE**

24 This Settlement Agreement contains the entire agreement between the Parties relating to the
25 Class Settlement of the Action and the transactions contemplated thereby, and all prior or
26 contemporaneous agreements, understandings, representations, and statements, whether oral or written,
27 and whether by a party or such party's legal counsel, are hereby superseded. No rights under this
28 Settlement Agreement may be waived except in writing as provided above.

1 **13.14. SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS**

2 This Settlement Agreement shall be binding on and inure to the benefit of the Parties and Class
3 Members (excluding only persons who timely Opt Out) and their respective present and former heirs,
4 trustees, executors, administrators, representatives, officers, directors, shareholders, agents, employees,
5 insurers, attorneys, accountants, auditors, advisors, consultants, pension plans, welfare benefit plans,
6 fiduciaries, parent companies, subsidiaries, affiliates, related companies, joint ventures, predecessors,
7 successors, and assigns.

8 **13.15. CORPORATE SIGNATORIES**

9 Any person executing this Settlement Agreement or any such related document on behalf of a
10 corporate signatory or on behalf of a partnership hereby warrants and promises, for the benefit of all
11 Parties hereto, that such person has been duly authorized by such corporation or partnership to execute
12 this Settlement Agreement or any such related document.

13 **13.16. EXECUTION IN COUNTERPARTS**

14 This Settlement Agreement shall become effective upon its execution by all of the undersigned.
15 The Parties may execute this Settlement Agreement in counterparts, and execution of counterparts shall
16 have the same force and effect as if all Settling Parties had signed the same instrument.

17 **13.17. ATTORNEY FEES, COSTS, AND EXPENSES**

18 Except as otherwise specifically provided for herein, each party shall bear her or its own
19 attorney fees, costs, and expenses, taxable or otherwise, incurred by them in or arising out of the Action
20 and shall not seek reimbursement thereof from any other party to this Settlement Agreement.

21 **13.18. ACTION TO ENFORCE AGREEMENT**

22 In any suit or court action to enforce the terms of this Agreement, the prevailing party shall be
23 entitled to recover her or its attorney fees and costs.

24 **14. EXECUTION**

25 The Parties and their counsel have executed this Settlement Agreement on the date below their
26 signatures or the signature of their representatives. The date of this Settlement Agreement shall be the
27 date of the latest signature.


28

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

APPROVAL AND EXECUTION BY PARTIES

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE:

Dated: 10/30/2025

Firmado por:

3D55D0B2BEA2450...

Vicente Jara
Plaintiff and Class Representative

DEFENDANT:

Dated: _____

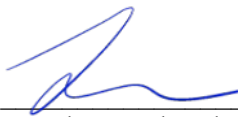
H & M Logging, Inc.

By: _____
Title: _____

APPROVED AS TO FORM BY COUNSEL

CLASS COUNSEL:

Dated: October 31, 2025

Melmed Law Group P.C.


Jonathan Melmed
Attorneys for Plaintiff

DEFENDANT'S COUNSEL:

Dated: _____

Berliner Cohen, LLP

Eileen P. Kennedy
Attorneys for Defendant

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

APPROVAL AND EXECUTION BY PARTIES

CLASS REPRESENTATIVE:

Dated: _____

Vicente Jara
Plaintiff and Class Representative

DEFENDANT:

Dated: 11-4-2025

H & M Logging, Inc.

By: Richard Naufala
Title: President/Owner

APPROVED AS TO FORM BY COUNSEL

CLASS COUNSEL:

Dated: _____

Melmed Law Group P.C.

Jonathan Melmed
Attorneys for Plaintiff

DEFENDANT'S COUNSEL:

Dated: November 10, 2025

Berliner Cohen, LLP

Eileen P. Kennedy
Attorneys for Defendant

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

EXHIBIT 1

Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

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

VICENTE JARA, an individual, on behalf of
himself, the State of California, as a private
attorney general, and on behalf of all others
similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

v.

H & M LOGGING, INC., a California
corporation; and DOES 1 TO 50,

Defendants.

Case No.: 24CV00821

Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement

A court authorized this notice. This is not a solicitation from a lawyer.

1 provide complete and accurate wage statements; and **(10)** deceptive, fraudulent, or otherwise unlawful
2 business practices based on the foregoing in violation of California’s Unfair Competition Law.

3 **Defendant denies all liability, denies all allegations in the Action, and has raised various**
4 **defenses to the claims.** Defendant asserts that it fully complied with all applicable wage and hour laws,
5 and contends that civil penalties under PAGA are not warranted. Defendant also denies that the Action
6 is suitable for class certification. Defendant has entered into the Settlement solely for purposes of
7 resolving this dispute to avoid costly, disruptive, and time-consuming litigation and does not admit to
8 any wrongdoing or liability.

9 The Court has not ruled on the merits in the Action. By approving the Settlement and issuing
10 this notice, the Court is *not* suggesting which side would win or lose the case if it went to trial or
11 whether the claims are suitable for class certification. To avoid the additional expense, inconvenience,
12 and risk of continued litigation, however, Plaintiff and Defendant (the “Parties”) have concluded that
13 it is in their respective best interests and the interests of the Class Members to settle the Action on the
14 terms summarized in this notice. The Settlement was reached after Defendant provided extensive
15 information and documents to Plaintiff’s counsel, and after lengthy arms-length non-collusive
16 negotiations between the Parties, including mediation with an experienced and well-respected mediator
17 in California. In these negotiations, both sides recognized the substantial risk of the Court deciding
18 against them at trial and determined that the Settlement was a fair, reasonable, and adequate way to
19 resolve the disputed claims.

20 Plaintiff and Plaintiff’s counsel—Jonathan Melmed and Laura Supanich of Melmed Law Group
21 P.C. (“Class Counsel”)—support the Settlement. Among the reasons for support are the defenses to
22 liability potentially available to Defendant, the risk of denial of class certification, the inherent risk of
23 trial on the merits, and the delays and uncertainties associated with litigation. Plaintiff and Class
24 Counsel believe that the settlement described in this notice is fair, adequate, reasonable, and in the best
25 interests of Plaintiff and the Class Members.

26 Under the Settlement, the following settlement class will be certified under California law: *all*
27 *individuals who are or were employed by Defendants as non-exempt employees in California during*
28 *the Class Period.* The “Class Period” is defined as the period from July 10, 2020, through **the date of**

1 preliminary approval of the settlement. The Settlement provides for a gross settlement amount of
2 \$92,260.00, a share of which is to be distributed to the Class Members based on the pro rata number of
3 weeks worked by the Class Members during the Class Period as a proportion of all weeks worked by
4 all Class Members. In exchange for their share of the settlement amount, all participating Class
5 Members will be deemed to have released Defendant from liability on the terms described in this notice.

6 On [date of preliminary approval], the Court preliminarily approved the Settlement and
7 conditionally certified the settlement class. This notice is being sent to you because Defendant's records
8 indicate that you worked for Defendant during the Class Period and that you meet the definition
9 required to be treated as a Class Member.

10 **2. IF YOU ARE STILL EMPLOYED BY DEFENDANT, THIS SETTLEMENT WILL**
11 **NOT AFFECT YOUR EMPLOYMENT.**

12 California law strictly prohibits retaliation. Further, Defendant is prohibited by law from taking
13 any adverse action against or otherwise target, retaliate, or discriminate against any Class Member
14 because of the Class Member's participation or decision not to participate in the Settlement.

15 **3. TERMS OF THE SETTLEMENT**

16 Defendant has agreed to pay \$92,260.00 (the "Gross Settlement Amount") to resolve the claims
17 in the Action. The Parties agreed to the following payments from the Gross Settlement Amount:

18 1. **Settlement Administration Costs.** The Court has approved APEX Class Action
19 Administration to act as the "Settlement Administrator," who is sending this notice to
20 you and will perform many other duties relating to the Settlement. Under the Settlement,
21 up to \$10,000.00 will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount to pay the Settlement
22 Administration Costs.

23 2. **Attorneys' Fees and Expenses.** Class Counsel have been prosecuting the Action on
24 behalf of the Class Members on a contingency fee basis (that is, without being paid any
25 money to date) and have been paying all litigation costs and expenses. To date, the
26 Parties have aggressively litigated many aspects of the case including investigation,
27 settlement efforts, and a full-day mediation session. The Court will determine the actual
28 amount awarded to Class Counsel as attorneys' fees, which will be paid from the Gross

1 Settlement Amount. Class Members are not personally responsible for any of Class
2 Counsel's attorneys' fees or expenses. Class Counsel will ask for fees of one-third of
3 the Gross Settlement Amount (i.e., \$30,753.33) as reasonable compensation for the
4 work Class Counsel performed and will continue to perform in the Action. Class
5 Counsel also will ask for reimbursement of up to \$15,000.00 for the costs Class Counsel
6 incurred in connection with the Action.

7 3. **Service Payment to Class Representative.** Class Counsel will ask the Court to provide
8 a service payment to Plaintiff in the amount of \$7,500.00 for Vicente Jara to compensate
9 him for his efforts on behalf of the Class Members in the Action, including assisting in
10 the investigation and consulting with Class Counsel and providing crucial documents to
11 Class Counsel. Plaintiff also may receive a share of the Settlement as a Class Member.

12 4. **PAGA Payment.** The Parties have agreed on a reasonable sum to be paid in settlement
13 of the PAGA claims included in the Action, which is \$20,000.00. The PAGA Payment
14 is to be approved by the Court pursuant to Labor Code section 2699 and is to be
15 distributed as follows: sixty-five percent (65%) (i.e., \$13,000.00) to the LWDA and
16 twenty-five percent (35%) (i.e., \$7,000.00) to the individuals who come within the
17 definition of an "aggrieved employee" for the purposes of the Settlement (i.e., all
18 individuals who are or were employed by Defendants as non-exempt employees in
19 California during the PAGA Period). The "PAGA Period" is defined for these purposes
20 to mean the period from July 10, 2023, through the date of preliminary approval of the
21 settlement.

22 After deducting the amounts above, the balance of the settlement amount will form the "Net
23 Settlement Amount" for distribution to the Class Members.

24 4. **DISTRIBUTION OF THE SETTLEMENT TO THE CLASS MEMBERS**

25 Each eligible Class Member who does not request exclusion from the Settlement will be deemed
26 a "Class Participant" and will receive a share from the Net Settlement Amount which will be distributed
27 pro rata based on the proportional number of weeks worked by each Class Member during the Class
28

1 Period (the “Individual Settlement Amount”). If any Class Member requests exclusion from the
2 Settlement, his or her share will be distributed to the remaining Class Participants.

3 Fifteen percent (15%) of each Individual Settlement Amount will constitute payment in the
4 form of wages (and each Class Participant will be issued an IRS Form W-2 for such payment to him
5 or her), and Eighty-Five percent (85%) of each Individual Settlement Amount will constitute penalties
6 and interest (and each Class Participant will be issued an IRS Form 1099 for such payment to him or
7 her).

8 Defendant, or its proxies, shall take all usual and customary deductions from the Individual
9 Settlement Amount payments that are distributed as wages, including, but not limited to, state and
10 federal tax withholding, disability premiums, and unemployment insurance premiums. There will be
11 no deduction taken from the interest or penalty distribution—it will, however, be reported on IRS Form
12 1099 as income. Class Participants are responsible for the proper income tax treatment of their
13 Individual Settlement Amount. The Settlement Administrator, Defendant and its counsel, and Class
14 Counsel cannot provide tax advice. Accordingly, Class Members should consult with their tax advisors
15 concerning the tax consequences and treatment of payments they receive under the Settlement.

16 The workweeks during which you actually performed work for Defendant during the Class
17 Period will be calculated based on Defendant’s records. If you feel that you were not credited with the
18 correct number of workweeks worked during the Class Period, you may submit evidence to the
19 Settlement Administrator on or before [Response Deadline] with documentation to establish the
20 number of workweeks you claim to have actually worked during the Class Period. **Documentation
21 sent to the Settlement Administrator will not be returned or preserved, so do *not* send originals.**
22 The Parties and the Settlement Administrator will promptly evaluate the evidence submitted and
23 discuss in good faith how many workweeks should be credited. The Settlement Administrator will
24 make the final decision as to how many weeks are credited and report the outcome to the Class
25 Participant. If you are unsatisfied with the decision, you may submit an objection, which is explained
26 below.

27 Settlement checks will be mailed to all Class Participants after the Court grants final approval
28 of the Settlement and judgment is entered.

1 **5. THE RELEASE OF CLAIMS**

2 If the Court approves the Settlement, the Court will enter judgment and the Settlement will bind
3 all Class Participants. The Class Participants will then be barred from bringing any “Released Claims”
4 against the “Released Parties” as those terms are defined below.

5 The “Released Parties” are Defendant and its parent, subsidiaries, affiliated entities, their
6 predecessors, successors, and their respective former and current shareholders, partners, members,
7 owners, directors, officers, managers, employees, insurers, assigns, agents, and attorneys, including
8 without limitation, Mr. Hautala.

9 The “Released Claims” are those claims arising out of or related to the allegations set forth in
10 the operative complaint and/or PAGA notice to the California Labor and Workforce Development
11 Agency or that could have been raised in the operative complaint and that arose during the Class Period
12 and/or PAGA Period, including without limitation claims for: (1) failure to pay minimum wage for all
13 hours worked in violation of Labor Code sections 1194 and 1194.2, and the applicable IWC Wage
14 Order(s); (2) failure to pay proper overtime wages in violation of Labor Code sections 510, 1197, and
15 1198, and the applicable IWC Wage Order(s); (3) failure to provide compliant rest periods and pay
16 missed rest break premiums in violation of Labor Code section 226.7 and the applicable IWC Wage
17 Order(s); (4) failure to provide compliant meal periods and pay missed meal period premiums in
18 violation of Labor Code sections 226.7 and 512, and the applicable IWC Wage Order(s); (5) failure to
19 maintain accurate employment records in violation of Labor Code section 1174; (6) failure to pay
20 timely wages during employment in violation of Labor Code sections 204, 210; (7) failure to pay all
21 wages due and owing at separation in violation of Labor Code sections 201, 202, and 203; (8) failure
22 to reimburse business expenses in violation of Labor Code sections 2802 and 2804; (9) failure to
23 provide complete and accurate wage statements in violation of Labor Code sections 226 and 226.3;
24 (10) deceptive, fraudulent, or otherwise unlawful business practices based on the foregoing in violation
25 of California’s Unfair Competition Law (Bus. & Prof. Code, §§ 17200–17210);(11) statutory penalties
26 based on the foregoing pursuant to PAGA (Lab. Code, §§ 2698-2699.6); and (12) all claims for
27 liquidated damages, penalties, interest, fees, costs based on the foregoing.
28

1 No other claims are released other than those claims specifically plead in the Complaint or
2 otherwise specifically identified herein. The Settlement does *not* release Defendant or any person,
3 party, or entity from claims, if any, by Class Members for workers compensation, unemployment, or
4 disability benefits of any nature.

5 Class Members who do not request exclusion from the Settlement will be deemed to have
6 acknowledged and agreed that their claims for wages and penalties in the Action are disputed, and that
7 the Settlement payments constitute payment of all sums allegedly due to them. Class Members will be
8 deemed to have acknowledged and agreed that California Labor Code section 206.5 is not applicable
9 to the Settlement payments. That section provides in pertinent part as follows:

10 “An employer shall not require the execution of a release of a claim or right on account
11 of wages due, or to become due, or made as an advance on wages to be earned, unless
12 payment of those wages has been made.”
13

14 **6. YOUR OPTIONS**

15 **6.1. DO NOTHING AND RECEIVE YOUR PORTION OF THE SETTLEMENT**

16 If you do nothing, you will be automatically included as a Class Participant in the Settlement
17 and will receive a settlement payment. You do *not* have to take any further action to receive your
18 settlement payment. It is, however, the responsibility of all Class Members to ensure that the Settlement
19 Administrator has your current address on file, or you may not receive important information or a
20 settlement payment. The estimated amount of your settlement payment if you do nothing is included
21 on the attached *Class Action Settlement Share Form*.

22 **6.2. REQUEST EXCLUSION FROM THE CLASS AND THE SETTLEMENT**

23 If you do *not* wish to take part in the class action portion of the Settlement (the “Class
24 Settlement”), you may exclude yourself (i.e., opt out of the Class Settlement) by sending the Settlement
25 Administrator a letter or card postmarked no later than [Response Deadline] that specifically requests
26 exclusion from the Class Settlement in this case. The request for exclusion must include your name,
27 address, telephone number, and signature, and it should state:
28

1 “I wish to be excluded from the settlement class in the case of *Vicente Jara v. H & M*
2 *Logging, Inc.*. I understand that if I ask to be excluded from the settlement class, I will
3 not receive any money from the settlement of this lawsuit and will not be releasing any
4 claims I might have.”

5 Send the request for exclusion directly to the Settlement Administrator at the following address
6 **by no later than [Response Deadline]:**

7 [Insert Settlement Administrator Address]
8

9 Any person who submits a timely request for exclusion from the Class Settlement shall, upon
10 receipt, no longer be a Class Member, shall be barred from participating in the Class Settlement, and
11 shall receive no benefits from the class action portion of the Settlement. If you want confirmation of
12 receipt of your request for exclusion, please send it by United States certified mail, return receipt
13 requested, or contact the Settlement Administrator.

14 **Importantly**, Class Members who timely and validly request exclusion from the Class
15 Settlement will *not* be excluded from their share of the PAGA Payment. Requesting exclusion from
16 the Class Settlement applies solely to the Class Members’ entitlement to the class action portion of the
17 Settlement and not their entitlement to the PAGA Payment. If you request exclusion from the Class
18 Settlement you will still be entitled to your share, if any, of the PAGA Payment.

19 **6.3. OBJECT TO THE SETTLEMENT**

20 You have the right to object to the terms of the Settlement if you do not request exclusion. If,
21 however, the Court rejects your objection, you will still be bound by the terms of the Settlement. If you
22 wish to object to the Settlement, or any portion of it, you may file with the Settlement Administrator
23 and the Court a written objection stating your name, address, telephone number, dates of employment
24 with Defendant, the case name and number, each specific reason in support of your objection, and any
25 legal support for each objection. Objections in writing must be mailed to the Settlement
26 Administrator—[Insert Settlement Administrator Address]—by no later than [Response Deadline] to
27 be considered. **Objections that do not include all required information, or that are not timely**
28 **submitted, might not be considered by the court.**

1 If you choose to object to the Settlement, you may also appear to speak at the final approval
2 and fairness hearing scheduled for [Final Approval Hearing Date], at [Final Approval Hearing Time]
3 in Department [Court Department] of the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of
4 Mendocino, located at [Court Location]. You have the right to appear either in person or through your
5 own attorney at this hearing.

6 If you object to the Settlement, you will remain a Class Member, and if the Court approves the
7 Settlement, you will receive payment and be bound by the terms of the Settlement in the same way as
8 Class Members who do not object. Any Class Member who does not object in the manner provided
9 above shall have waived any objection to the Settlement, whether by appeal or otherwise.

10
11 **7. HOW TO UPDATE OR CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS**

12 If you move after receiving this notice or if it was misaddressed, please contact the Settlement
13 Administrator, [Settlement Administrator], at [Settlement Administrator Phone] or by email at
14 [Settlement Administrator Email], as soon as possible. **This is important to ensure that future notices
15 and/or the Settlement payment reach you.**

16 **8. NOTICE OF FINAL JUDGMENT IF THE SETTLEMENT IS APPROVED**

17 Within seven (7) days after the Court has held a final and fairness approval hearing and entered
18 a final order approving the Settlement, if it chooses to do so, the Settlement Administrator will post a
19 copy of that order and final judgment on its website at the following website address:

20 [Case-Specific Settlement URL (to be added by Settlement Administrator)]

21
22 **9. IF THE SETTLEMENT IS NOT APPROVED**

23 If the Settlement is not approved by the Court, or if any of its conditions are not satisfied, the
24 Settlement may be voided, in which case no money will be paid, and the case will return to litigation.
25 If that happens, there is no assurance: **(1)** that the class will be certified by the Court; **(2)** that any
26 decision at trial would be in favor of Class Members; **(3)** that a trial decision, if any, would be as
27 favorable to the Class Members as the Settlement; or **(4)** that any favorable trial decision would be
28 upheld if an appeal was filed.

1 **10. QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS**

2 **PLEASE DO NOT CALL OR CONTACT THE COURT.** If you have any questions about
3 the settlement, you may contact the Settlement Administrator at: [Settlement Administrator Phone] or
4 by e-mail at [Settlement Administrator Email]. You may also contact Class Counsel at the addresses
5 or phone numbers listed below.

6

7 **Lawyers Representing Plaintiff and the Class Members**

8 **MELMED LAW GROUP P.C.**
9 Jonathan Melmed
jm@melmedlaw.com
10 Laura Supanich
lms@melmedlaw.com
11 1801 Century Park East, Suite 850
12 Los Angeles, California 90067
Phone: (310) 824-3828
13 Fax: (310) 862-6851

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

EXHIBIT 2

Class Action Settlement Share Form

CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT SHARE FORM

Vicente Jara v. H & M Logging, Inc.

Case Number 24CV00821

Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Mendocino

The proposed class action settlement agreement (the “Settlement”) described in the accompanying *Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement* resolves disputed claims against Defendant H & M Logging, Inc. (“Defendant”) arising out of its compensation practices during the period from July 10, 2020, through the date of preliminary approval of the settlement (the “Class Period”) as applied to all individuals who are or were employed by Defendants as non-exempt employees in California during the Class Period (“Class Members”).

You are receiving this form because you are believed to be a Class Member. **According to Defendant’s records, you worked [REDACTED] workweeks for Defendant during the Class Period. The number of workweeks is based on the number of workweeks during which you actually performed work for Defendant. Accordingly, your share of the Settlement is currently estimated to be \$ [REDACTED],** which is an estimate of your allocated portion the Net Settlement Amount, as that term is defined in the accompanying *Notice of Proposed Class Action Settlement*. Your estimated share of the Settlement may increase depending on factors such as, but not limited to, the number of Class Members who effectively exclude themselves from the Settlement.

You do not need to do anything to receive money under the Settlement.

If you believe the information provided above as to the number of your workweeks is incorrect and wish to dispute it, please contact the Settlement Administrator no later than **[Response Deadline]** at:

[Settlement Administrator Contact Information]

If you dispute the information stated above, the information Defendant provided to the Settlement Administrator will control unless you are able to provide documentation that establishes otherwise. Any disputes, along with supporting documentation, must be postmarked no later than **[Response Deadline]**.

Do not send originals; documentation sent to the claims administrator will not be returned or preserved.