

1 **ORDER**

2 Having considered the Motion, points and authorities, and declaration submitted in
3 support of the Motion, including the Joint Stipulation of Class Action Settlement and Release
4 (“Settlement Agreement” or “Settlement”) and exhibits, and **GOOD CAUSE** appearing, **IT IS**
5 **HEREBY ORDERED** that the Motion is **GRANTED**, subject to the following findings and
6 orders:

7 1. This Order incorporates by reference the definitions in the Settlement Agreement,
8 and all terms defined therein shall have the same meaning as set forth in the Settlement
9 Agreement.

10 2. The Class shall be conditionally certified for settlement purposes only and shall
11 consist of all current and former hourly-paid or non-exempt employees who worked for
12 Defendant Azuma Foods International, Inc., USA (“Defendant”) directly or through a staffing
13 agency within the State of California at any time during the period between August 15, 2012 and
14 December 31, 2016. Should the Settlement not become final, the fact that the Parties were
15 willing to stipulate to class certification as part of the Settlement shall have no bearing on, nor be
16 admissible in connection with, the issue of whether a class should be certified in a non-settlement
17 context.

18 3. The class action settlement set forth in the Settlement Agreement, entered into
19 among the Parties and their counsel, is preliminarily approved as it appears to be proper, to fall
20 within the range of reasonableness, to be the product of arm’s-length and informed negotiations,
21 to treat all Class Members fairly, and to be presumptively valid, subject only to any objections
22 that may be raised at or before the final approval hearing. The Court further finds that Plaintiff
23 Keith Lacy adequately investigated and researched his claims and Defendant’s defenses, and that
24 Plaintiff was able to reasonably evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the claims and the
25 ability to certify them. Plaintiff has provided the Court with enough information about the nature
26 and magnitude of the claims being settled, as well as the impediments to recovery, to make an
27 independent assessment of the reasonableness of the terms to which the parties have agreed.

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1 4. The Court finds that settlement now will avoid additional and potentially
2 substantial litigation costs, as well as delay and further risks if the Parties were to continue to
3 litigate the Action.

4 5. The Court preliminarily approves the Settlement Agreement, including all the
5 terms and conditions set forth therein and the Class Settlement Amount and allocation of
6 payments.

7 6. The rights of any potential dissenters to the proposed Settlement are adequately
8 protected in that they may exclude themselves from the Settlement and proceed with any alleged
9 claims they may have against Defendant, or they may object to the Settlement and appear before
10 this Court. To do so they must follow the procedures outlined in the Settlement Agreement and
11 Notice of Class Action Settlement. Failure to follow the procedures outlined in the Settlement
12 Agreement and Notice of Class Action Settlement for making objections shall result in waiver
13 and the objector shall be forever foreclosed from challenging any of the terms of the Settlement.

14 7. The Court approves, as to form and content, the proposed Notice of Class Action
15 Settlement and the Request for Exclusion procedures and objection procedures contained therein.
16 Attached hereto as **EXHIBIT A** is a true and correct copy of the Notice of Class Action
17 Settlement.

18 8. The Court directs the mailing, by First-Class U.S. mail of the Notice Packets to
19 Class Members in accordance with the schedule set forth below and the other procedures
20 described in the Settlement Agreement. The Court finds that the method selected for
21 communicating the preliminary approval of the Settlement Agreement to Class Members is the
22 best notice practicable under the circumstances, constitutes sufficient notice to all persons
23 entitled to notice, and thereby satisfies due process.

24 9. Plaintiff Keith Lacy is a suitable class representative and is appointed Class
25 Representative for the Settlement Class conditionally certified by this Order.

26 10. The Court appoints Justice Law Corporation as Class Counsel. The Court finds
27 that counsel have demonstrable experience litigating, certifying, and settling class actions, and
28 will serve as adequate counsel for the Class conditionally certified by this Order.

1 11. It is further ordered that pending further order of this Court, all proceedings in this
2 matter except those contemplated herein and as part of the Settlement are stayed. All dates and
3 deadlines associated with this action shall be stayed, other than those contemplated herein and in
4 the Settlement Agreement and pertaining to the administration of the Settlement of this action.

5 12. It is further ordered that to facilitate administration of this Settlement, all Class
6 Members, including Plaintiff, are hereby enjoined from filing or prosecuting any claims, cases,
7 suits or administrative proceedings (including without limitation, filing or pursuing claims with
8 the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement) regarding claims released by the
9 Settlement, unless and until such Class Members have filed valid and timely written requests for
10 exclusion with the Settlement Administrator and the time for submitting claims to the Settlement
11 Administrator has elapsed.

12 13. The Court approves and appoints Phoenix Settlement Administrators as the
13 Settlement Administrator.

14 14. The following dates shall govern for purposes of this Settlement:

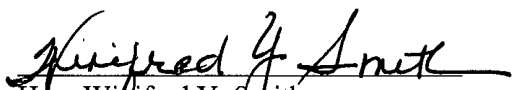
Date	Event
November 10, 2017	Last day for Defendant to produce the Class List to the Settlement Administrator.
November 20, 2017	Last day for the Settlement Administrator to mail Notice Packets to all Class Members.
January 19, 2018, or if a Notice Packet is returned as undeliverable, 15 days after the date it is re-mailed.	Last day for Class Members to timely opt-out or submit a written objection to the Settlement unless extended due to re-mailing of the Notice Packet.
February 20, 2018	Last day for Plaintiff to file the Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement and Motion for Attorneys' Fees, Costs, and Class Representative Enhancement Payment.
February 20, 2018	Last day for Plaintiff to file any responses to objections and for the Settlement Administrator to submit their declaration re Administration Process.
March 16, 2018 - 11:00 A.M.	Hearing on Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement and Motion for Attorneys' Fees, Costs, and Class Representative Enhancement Payment.

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The Court expressly reserves the right to continue or adjourn the final approval hearing from time to time without further notice to the Class Members.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: October 27, 2017


Hon. Wilfred Y. Smith
Judge of the California Superior Court

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

*Keith Lacy v. Azuma Foods International, Inc., USA, Alameda County Superior
Court Case No. RG16827402*

NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

**To: ALL CURRENT AND FORMER HOURLY-PAID OR NON-EXEMPT
EMPLOYEES WHO WORKED FOR AZUMA FOODS INTERNATIONAL,
INC., USA DIRECTLY OR THROUGH A STAFFING AGENCY WITHIN
THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FROM AUGUST 15, 2012 THROUGH
DECEMBER 31, 2016.**

**PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY. YOUR RIGHTS MAY BE
AFFECTED.**

**YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE MONEY FROM THIS PROPOSED
SETTLEMENT.**

This Notice is Court Approved. This is not a solicitation from an attorney.

PLEASE VERIFY YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS:

«Barcode» Claim #: MIM-«Claim»-«CD» «MailRec»
«First1» «Last1»
«c/o»
«Address1» «Address2»
«City»,«ST» «ZIP» «Country»

Name/Address Corrections (if any):

**Your Anticipated Settlement Payment is:
<< EST. INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENT PAYMENT (Show Actual Dollars)>>**

PLEASE READ THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY AS IT MAY AFFECT YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

WHY DID I GET THIS NOTICE?

You have received this Notice because we believe that you are a class member who may be entitled to money from this settlement.

This Notice describes a proposed settlement of the lawsuit: *Lacy v. Azuma Foods International, Inc., USA*, pending in Alameda County Superior Court, Case No. RG16827402 (the "Lawsuit"). A complaint was filed on August 15, 2016. This Notice is being sent to you by the order of the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Alameda, which preliminarily approved the settlement and conditionally certified the class on [date]. This Notice informs you of the terms of the proposed settlement, describes your rights in connection with the settlement, and explains what steps you may take to object to, or exclude yourself from, the settlement. **If you do not exclude yourself from the settlement and the settlement is finally approved by the Court, you will receive a settlement payment and be bound by the terms of the settlement and any final judgment.**

YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND OPTIONS IN THE SETTLEMENT	
DO NOTHING AND REMAIN IN THE CLASS	Obtain Settlement benefits and give up your rights to ever sue the Defendant about any of the claims in this case.
EXCLUDE YOURSELF FROM THE SETTLEMENT	Opt out of the class by [date] and get no benefits from the Settlement, and keep your rights to be part of any other lawsuit against the Defendant about any of the claims in this case.
OBJECT	Write to the Settlement Administrator by [date] about why you do not like the Settlement or any of its terms. If you want to object, you will remain in the class and may still receive a settlement payment.
IF YOU ARE A CURRENT EMPLOYEE OF DEFENDANT, STATE AND FEDERAL LAW PROHIBIT RETALIATION AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST YOU REGARDLESS OF WHICH OF THE ABOVE OPTIONS YOU PURSUE.	

WHAT IS THIS LAWSUIT ABOUT?

The Lawsuit was filed by Plaintiff Keith Lacy ("Plaintiff") on behalf of hourly-paid or non-exempt employees who worked for Azuma Foods International, Inc., USA ("Azuma Foods") directly or through a staffing agency during the Class Period in California.

The Lawsuit pleaded class allegations against Azuma Foods for: (1) failure to pay overtime wages; (2) failure to provide meal periods; (3) failure to provide rest periods; (4) failure timely to pay minimum wages; (5) failure to pay all wages due upon separation of employment; (6) failure to issue wage statements in compliance with Labor Code § 226; (7) violation of California Labor Code § 2698 et seq. for civil penalties under the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004; and (8) violation of California

Business & Professions Code § 17200 et seq. based on the alleged failures set forth in (1) through (7). Azuma Foods denies each and all of the claims and contentions alleged by the Plaintiff. The Court has not made any rulings regarding the merits of the cases. Defendant denied and continues to deny all of Plaintiff's allegations.

After engaging in extensive investigation and a full day of mediation before an experienced mediator, in which both sides recognized the substantial risks of an adverse result in the Lawsuit for either side, Plaintiff and Defendant agreed on a class settlement that was preliminarily approved by the Court on [date]. Plaintiff and Class Counsel support the settlement.

The class settlement represents a compromise and settlement of highly disputed claims. Nothing in the settlement is intended or will be construed as an admission by Defendant that Plaintiff's claims in the Lawsuit have merit or that it has any liability to Plaintiff or the Class on those claims.

The parties and their counsel have concluded that the settlement is advantageous, considering the risks and uncertainties to each side of continued litigation.

WHAT IS A CLASS ACTION?

In a class action lawsuit, one or more persons sue on behalf of other people who have similar claims. Keith Lacy is the Class Representative or Named Plaintiff in the Lawsuit, and he asserts claims on behalf of himself and the class. Azuma Foods International, Inc., USA is the Defendant. A class action allows the Court to resolve the claims of all the class members at the same time. A class member is bound by the determination or judgment entered in the case, whether the class wins or loses, and may not file his or her own lawsuit on the same claims that were decided in the class action. A class action allows one court to resolve all of the issues in a lawsuit for all the class members who choose not to exclude themselves from the class.

WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE SETTLEMENT CLASS?

All persons who were employed by Azuma Foods directly or through a staffing agency in non-exempt positions in the State of California at any time during August 15, 2012 to December 31, 2016.

The Class or Participating Class Member shall not include any person who submits a timely and valid request for exclusion.

WHAT ARE THE TERMS OF THE CLASS SETTLEMENT?

In exchange for the release of claims against it and final disposition of the Lawsuit, Defendant will pay One Million Nine Hundred Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$1,900,000.00) ("Class Settlement Amount"). After attorneys' fees and costs, enhancement payment to the Named Plaintiff, a payment to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and settlement administration costs are deducted from the Class Settlement Amount, the remaining "Net Settlement Amount" will be distributed to Participating Class Members. Subject to Court approval, the Class Settlement Amount will be allocated as follows:

- **Individual Settlement Payment:** All Participating Class Members are eligible to receive money from the Net Settlement Amount. Each estimated payment is the pro rata allocation of the Net Settlement Amount based on the Members' total Workweeks¹ worked during the Class Period.² Your estimated payment is on the first page of this Notice, but the actual amount may vary somewhat based on the actual implementation of the settlement.
- **Class Representatives Enhancement Payment:** Named Plaintiff will request from the Court an award of \$15,000 in recognition of his efforts and risks in assisting with the prosecution of the Lawsuit. Any amount ordered by the Court will be paid from the Class Settlement Amount.
- **Class Counsel Award:** Class Counsel will request from the Court not more than thirty-five percent (35%) of the Class Settlement Amount (\$665,000 of \$1,900,000) as attorneys' fees for litigation and resolution of the Lawsuit, as supported by declaration(s). Class Counsel will also request from the Court reimbursement for the advanced litigation costs, which are estimated to be no more than \$35,000. Any amount ordered by the Court will be paid from the Class Settlement Amount.
- **PAGA Payment:** \$40,000 from the Class Settlement Amount is allocated for payment under the Private Attorneys General Act of 2004. Upon Court approval, 75% of the allocation (\$30,000) will be paid to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and 25% (\$10,000) of the allocation will be distributed as part of the Net Settlement Amount. Any amount ordered by the Court will be paid from the Class Settlement Amount.
- **Settlement Administration:** The cost of settlement administration is approximately \$12,000, which pays for tasks such as mailing and tracking this Notice, mailing checks and tax forms, and reporting to the parties and the Court. Any amount ordered by the Court will be paid from the Class Settlement Amount.
- Any checks issued to Participating Class Members shall remain valid and negotiable for one hundred and eighty (180) days from the date of their issuance. After that time, any such unclaimed checks will be tendered to Children's Advocacy Centers of California, a 501(c)(3) charity, in accord with the procedures set forth in section 384 of the California Code of Civil Procedure, as amended by Assembly Bill No. 103 (June 27, 2017).

¹ "Workweeks" or "Weeks Worked" means the number of days of employment for each Class Member during the applicable Class Period, subtracting days on leave of absence (if any), dividing by seven (7), and rounding up to the nearest whole number. All Class Members will be credited with at least one Workweek.

² Participating Class Member will receive a share of the Net Settlement Amount with the numerator being the Participating Class Members total number of Workweeks earned during the Class Period as a Class Member and the denominator being all Participating Class Members' total Workweeks worked during the Class Period. The resulting fraction will be multiplied by the Net Settlement Amount to determine the Participating Class Member's individual settlement payment.

If you do not exclude yourself you will give up your Released Claims

The Released Claims means any and all causes of action, wage and hour claims, rights, demands, liabilities, actual damages, statutory damages, penalties, liabilities, liquidated damages, interest, attorneys' fees, litigation costs, expenses, restitution, equitable relief, and losses alleged in the operative complaint or which could reasonably have been alleged in the operative complaint filed in the Action based on the operated facts contained therein, including, but not limited to: (a) any alleged failure by Defendant (1) to pay wages, minimum wages, or overtime; (2) to provide meal or rest periods; (3) to provide accurate wage statements to employees; (4) to timely pay wages during employment; (5) to pay all wages due upon separation of employment; (6) to issue wage statements in compliance with Labor Code § 226; or (7) any alleged failure by Defendant to maintain payroll records; (b) any right or claim for civil penalties pursuant to the Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act of 2004, California Labor Code § 2698 et seq., or any penalties arising under the Labor Code or Wage Order based on the alleged failures set forth in (a)(1) through (a)(7) above; (c) any right or claim for unfair business practices in violation of California Business & Professions Code § 17200 et seq. based on the alleged failures set forth in (a)(1) through (a)(7) above; and (d) any violation of the California Labor Code arising from or related to the conduct alleged in (a)(1) through (a)(7) above, including, without limitation, violation of Sections 201, 202, 203, 204, 226, 226.7, 510, 512, 558, 1174, 1194, 1194.2, 1197, 1197.1, 1198, 2698 et seq., or any other state statute, rule and/or regulation (Wage Order), or similar causes of action which any Class Member has or might have, known or unknown, of any kind whatsoever, that was alleged or could reasonably have alleged out of the factual allegations in the complaint.

The release will extend to and cover Azuma Foods International, Inc., USA as well as any of its past, present, and future parents, affiliates, subsidiaries, divisions, predecessors, successors, and assigns, and each of their officers, directors, board members, trustees, shareholders, members, employees, agents, attorneys, auditors, accountants, benefits administrators or third-party administrators, experts, contractors, stockholders, representatives, partners, insurers, reinsurers, and other persons acting on their behalf.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO RECEIVE A SETTLEMENT PAYMENT?

You do not need to do anything to receive a payment from the Net Settlement Amount.

Azuma Foods's records show that you were employed from [start date] to [end date] and worked a total of ____ Workweeks as a Class Member. Your anticipated settlement share as stated on page 1 of this document is calculated using that Workweek information.

If you dispute the information about the amount of Workweeks that Azuma Foods's records show you worked during the Class Period, you must advise the Settlement Administrator to substantiate your dispute.

To dispute the amount of Workweeks you must send in the mail any records (e.g. paystubs, pay checks or other records) supporting your dates of employment with a letter explaining the dispute and be sure to include the last four digits of your social security number by [the Response Deadline]. The date of the post-mark will determine if it was timely mailed.

Your anticipated settlement share will be paid in three separate payments. The first payment will be mailed within twenty-one (21) days of the date the Settlement becomes final. The second payment will be paid within two hundred and one (201) days of the date the Settlement becomes final. The final payment will be paid within three hundred and eighty-six (386) days of the date the Settlement becomes final. ***If your address changes before you receive your final payment, please contact the Settlement Administrator to update your address.***

One-third of the settlement share will be characterized as wages and therefore taxes will be withheld prior to payment. IRS Form W-2 will be issued for this one-third allocation. Azuma Foods will pay the employer's share of the payroll taxes on this one-third allocation. Two-thirds of the settlement share will be characterized as penalties and interests. There will be no withholding from this portion. IRS Form 1099-MISC will issue for this two-thirds allocation.

The Settlement Administrator is:

Lacy v. Azuma Foods International, Inc., USA
c/o _____
Street
City, CA Zip Code

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SETTLEMENT?

You have the right to request exclusion from the settlement. To do so, you must submit a written opt-out request to the Settlement Administrator at the following address:

Lacy v. Azuma Foods International, Inc., USA
c/o _____
Street
City, CA Zip Code

To be valid, a written request for exclusion must: (1) state your name, address, telephone number, and last four digits of your social security number; (2) be signed by you; (3) be mailed first-class postage pre-paid by [date] to the Settlement Administrator at the above address; and (4) clearly state that you do not wish to be included in the Settlement. The date of the post-mark will determine if it was timely mailed. Unless you timely request to be excluded from the settlement, you will be bound by the judgment upon final approval of the settlement and payment of the Class Settlement Amount, including the Release described in this Notice.

If you timely request to be excluded from the settlement, you will not be entitled to receive any payment under the settlement. Class Counsel will not represent your interests if you request to be excluded.

WHAT IF I WANT TO OBJECT TO THIS SETTLEMENT?

Any Class Member who has **not** asked to be excluded from the settlement may object to the settlement and may appear at the hearing where the Court will make a final decision whether or not to approve the settlement (the “Final Approval Hearing”). The Final Approval Hearing is scheduled to take place on [Date], at [Time] in Department 21 of the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Alameda, located at 1221 Oak Street. Oakland, CA 94612.

To be valid, the written objection must be served on the Settlement Administrator, by [DATE]. The written objection must state: (1) your full name, address and telephone number; (2) a written statement of all grounds for the objection accompanied by any legal support for the objection; (3) a statement as to whether you intend to appear at the final approval hearing; (4) last four digits of your social security number; and (5) the signature of you or your counsel.

You have the right to hire your own attorney, at your own expense, to submit an objection or to appear on your behalf at the Final Approval Hearing. You may, but are not required to appear at the hearing to have your objection considered.

Filing an objection will *not* exclude you from the Settlement Class. You will still have the right to receive an individual settlement payment, unless you have requested to be excluded.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT EXCLUDE MYSELF FROM THIS SETTLEMENT?

The settlement, if finally approved by the Court and conditioned upon full payment of the Class Settlement Amount will bind all Class Members who do not request to be excluded from the settlement whether or not they receive or timely cash their Individual Settlement Payment. Final approval of the settlement will bar any Class Member who does not request to be excluded from the settlement from hereafter initiating a lawsuit or proceeding regarding the Released Claims. The Settlement Agreement contains additional details about the scope of the release.

DO I HAVE A LAWYER IN THIS CASE?

The Court has ordered that, for purposes of this Settlement, the interests of Plaintiff and the Class Members are represented by:

Douglas Han Shunt Tatavos-Gharajeh	
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Daniel J. Park Justice Law Corporation 411 N. Central Ave., Suite 500 Glendale, California 91203 Telephone: (818) 230-7502 info@justicelawcorp.com	
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(collectively, "Class Counsel"). If you want to be represented by your own lawyer, you may hire one at your own expense.

WHAT IF MY INFORMATION CHANGES?

If, after you receive this notice, you change your postal address or telephone number, it is your responsibility to inform the Settlement Administrator of your updated information.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The foregoing is only a summary of the settlement. To see a copy of the Settlement Agreement (which defines the capitalized terms used in this Notice and provides a brief summary of what has happened in the Lawsuit), the Court's Preliminary Approval Order, Class Counsel's application for attorneys' fees and costs, the operative Complaint filed in the Lawsuit, and other filed documents related to the Lawsuit and this Settlement, you may view all such files in the following ways: 1) Online at the Settlement Administrators Website [Insert web address]. 2) Online on the Alameda County Superior Court's website, known as 'DomainWeb' at <https://publicrecords.alameda.courts.ca.gov/PRS/> After arriving at the website, click the 'Search By Case Number' link, then enter RG16827402 and click 'SEARCH.' Images of every document filed in the case may be viewed through the "register of Actions" at a minimal charge. 3) You may also view images of every document filed in the case free of charge by using one of the computer terminal kiosks available at each court location that has a facility for civil filings. Rene C. Davison Courthouse located at 1225 Fallon St., Oakland CA 94612 and Hayward Hall of Justice located at 24405 Amador St., Hayward CA 94544 has these kiosks available.

IF YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, you may contact the Settlement Administrator at [] or the Class Counsel listed above. Please refer to the Azuma Foods International, Inc., USA Class Action Settlement.

PLEASE DO NOT TELEPHONE OR CONTACT THE COURT OR DEFENDANT'S COUNSEL FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THIS SETTLEMENT.