

F I L E D
Clerk of the Superior Court

SEP 13 2024

By: B. Delgado, Deputy

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**

ROBERT BENNETT, *et al.*

Plaintiff,

vs.

PATRIOT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES,
INC., *et al.*

Defendants.

Case No. 37-2022-00044044-CU-OE-CTL

Hon. Matthew C. Braner
Dept. 60

CLASS ACTION

**Amended [~~Proposed~~] Order Granting Final
Approval of Class Action Settlement and
Attorneys' Fees and Costs and Entering
Judgment**

Motion for Final Approval/Attorneys' Fees:

Date: September 13, 2024

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Action Filed: November 1, 2022

1 This matter came on for hearing on September 13, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. in Department 60 of the
2 above-captioned Court, the Honorable Matthew C. Braner presiding, on (1) Plaintiffs’ Motion for Final
3 Approval of Class Action Settlement and (2) Plaintiffs’ Motion for Attorneys’ Fees and Costs.

4 Having received and considered the motions and supporting papers, including the Class Action
5 and PAGA Settlement Agreement (“Settlement”), the evidence and documents received by the Court
6 in connection with the Motions for Final Approval and Attorneys’ Fees and Costs, and the previously
7 decided Motion for Preliminary Approval, the Court GRANTS FINAL APPROVAL of the Settlement
8 and ORDERS AND MAKES THE FOLLOWING DETERMINATIONS:

9 1. Pursuant to the terms of the Settlement and the Order Granting Preliminary Approval,
10 and the Settlement, a notice was sent to each class member by first-class U.S. mail. The notice
11 informed the class of the terms of the Settlement, their right to receive a settlement payment without
12 any required action, their right to comment upon or object to the Settlement, and their right to appear
13 in person or by counsel at the Final Approval Hearing and to be heard regarding approval of the
14 Settlement. Adequate periods of time were provided for each of these procedures.

15 2. Zero class members returned a written objection to the proposed Settlement as part of
16 the notice process or stated an intention to appear at the Final Approval Hearing and there were no
17 dissenting appearances from class members at the hearing. One class member requested exclusion
18 from the Settlement: Ashkan A. Moghaddam. This “opt out” is affirmatively excluded from the class
19 settlement.

20 3. The Court finds and determines the notice procedure afforded adequate protections to
21 the class and provides the basis for the Court’s informed decision regarding approval of the Settlement
22 based the response. The Court finds and determines the notice provided was the best notice
23 practicable, satisfying the requirements of law and due process.

24 4. For purposes of approving this Settlement only, this Court finds and concludes: (a) the
25 proposed class is ascertainable and so numerous that joinder of all members of the class is
26 impracticable; (b) there are questions of law or fact common to the proposed class, and there is a well-
27 defined community of interest among members of the class with respect to the subject matter of the
28 claims; (c) the claims of the representative are typical of the claims of the class; (d) the class

1 representatives have and will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class; (e) a class action
2 is superior to other available methods for an efficient adjudication of this controversy in the context of
3 settlement; and (f) the law firms of Ferraro Vega Employment Lawyers, Inc., and Gaines Law
4 Corporation are qualified and adequate to serve as Class Counsels in this action.

5 5. The Court confirms certification, for settlement purposes only, of the class as defined in
6 the Settlement and approved at the preliminary approval stage.

7 6. The Court finds and determines the terms set forth in the Settlement are fair, reasonable,
8 and adequate and, having found the Settlement was reached as a result of informed and non-collusive
9 arms'-length negotiations facilitated by a neutral and experienced mediator, directs the Parties to
10 effectuate the Settlement according to its terms. The Court further finds the Parties conducted
11 extensive investigation, research, and informal discovery, and that their attorneys were able to
12 reasonably evaluate their respective positions. The Court also finds that Settlement will enable the
13 Parties to avoid additional and potentially substantial litigation costs, as well as delay and risks if the
14 Parties were to continue to litigate the case. The Court has reviewed the monetary recovery and
15 recognizes the significant value provided to the Class. Therefore, the Court approves the Settlement
16 and incorporates the terms of the Settlement in full into this Final Approval Order as though fully set
17 forth herein.

18 7. The Court finds and determines the fees and expenses in administering the Settlement
19 incurred by the Settlement Administrator of \$10,500 are fair and reasonable. The Court orders these
20 administration costs be paid in accordance with the terms of the Settlement.

21 8. The Court finds and determines the Service Awards of \$10,000 to each named Plaintiff
22 as fair and reasonable. The Court orders the service awards be paid in accordance with the terms of
23 the Settlement.

24 9. The Court finds and determines payment to the California Labor and Workforce
25 Development Agency of \$37,500, as its 75% share of the civil penalties under the Private Attorneys
26 General Act is fair, reasonable, and appropriate. The Court orders that amount be paid in accordance
27 with the terms of the Settlement and approves the settlement of claims under the Private Attorneys
28 General Act pursuant to Labor Code § 2699(1)(2).

1 10. Pursuant to the terms of the Settlement and the statutory provisions authorizing
2 attorneys' fees under the California Labor Code and Code of Civil Procedure, as set forth in the Motion
3 for Attorneys' Fees, the Court awards Class Counsels attorneys' fees of \$342,097.62 and litigation
4 costs of \$16,226.66. Class Counsels have sufficiently explained the basis for the fee award based on
5 a percentage of the fund. The Court finds such amounts to be fair and reasonable. The Court orders
6 the Settlement Administrator to make these payments in accordance with the Settlement. Moreover,
7 because the escalator clause has triggered as set forth in supplemental declaration of the Administrator,
8 on file with the Court, pursuant to the terms of the Settlement, the Gross Settlement Amount shall be
9 \$1,026.395.50.

10 11. Without affecting the finality of this Order or the entry of judgment in any way, the
11 Court retains jurisdiction of all matters relating to the interpretation, administration, implementation,
12 and enforcement of this Order and the Settlement.

13 12. Nothing in this Order shall preclude any action to enforce the Parties' obligations under
14 the Settlement or under this Order, including the requirement that Defendant make payments to Class
15 Members in accordance with the Settlement.

16 13. The Court hereby ENTERS FINAL JUDGMENT in accordance with the terms of the
17 Settlement, in accordance with this Final Approval Order and Judgment.

18 14. The Parties shall comply with Cal. Rules of Court Rule 3.771(b), by filing a Notice of
19 Entry of Judgment with the Court.

20
21 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

22
23 Date: 9/13/24



24 The Honorable Matthew C. Braner
25 Judge of the Superior Court