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LAX Quarantined Cannery Workers Reach Resolution with Red Salmon/North Pacific Seafoods

The North Pacific/Red Salmon Cannery workers held last month in quarantine at an LAX hotel announced a settlement of their lawsuit filed against North Pacific Seafoods for unpaid wages, the failure to follow Covid testing and quarantine protocols and false imprisonment. The settlement is valued at more than \$440,000 and will be paid out on a pro-rata basis to the 165 workers.

The suit alleged that on June 2, 2020, prospective cannery workers from Mexico and other parts of the United States were directed to travel to the Crowne Plaza LAX Hotel. The workers were informed they would be tested for COVID-19, quarantined for 4 days and then flown via charter plane to Alaska. The lawsuit described how the mostly Spanish-speaking workers from Mexico arrived at the hotel on June 10th and waited in a cramped and crowded hallway at the hotel for hours until their names were called and they were processed and tested for COVID-19. After being processed and tested, the workers were required to go to their hotel rooms and remain there.

The lawsuit further claimed when three prospective workers tested positive for COVID-19, the workers were informed they would remain in quarantine until June 25th. The workers' hotel room keys were deactivated so they could not leave and re-enter their rooms. Additionally, as the lawsuit stated, the workers were told they would not be paid for the time in confinement and that if they left their rooms they would be terminated. The workers were flown to Alaska on June 22nd.

“We are very pleased to reach this settlement with North Pacific,” said Jonathan Davis, an attorney who filed the action on behalf of the workers. “The case became very complicated once the workers were flown to Alaska because, as a result of the lawsuit, the

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company sought to settle the claims with each worker on an individual basis and undermine the case. Not surprisingly many workers were taking the deal.”

“Once the company began settling with individual workers, we filed papers with the court to stop what we believed was an unfair process. As a result, we were able to negotiate a better agreement not just for the workers in Alaska but for all the workers who were held in the quarantine, whether they went north or not.”

“Most of the 165 workers are eligible to receive \$2,685. To be paid they must sign a release that was negotiated with the company. All the workers are encouraged to sign the agreement.”

Once the releases are signed and the workers paid, the parties will seek a dismissal of the action in San Francisco Superior Court.

“A month ago these workers, who travelled from various states in Mexico to do seasonal work thousands of miles from home, were told they would be paid nothing for their time in quarantine. We acted quickly, filed suit and one month later they now have just compensation.”

“We are not seeking any fees or costs and are proud we took on this challenging case *pro bono*,” added Davis. “We look forward to bringing this matter to a successful final resolution in the coming weeks.”

Any workers seeking more information on the settlement can call the Arns Law Firm at (415) 495-7800.

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