

FILED
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
SAN BERNARDINO DISTRICT

OCT 24 2024

BY Amber M. Gear
AMBER M. GEAR, DEPUTY

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

THOMAS FOSTER BYLER III, individually
and on behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiff,

vs.

CROWN CASTLE USA, INC.; and DOES 1
through 20, inclusive,

Defendant.

Case No. CIVSB2204108

*Assigned for All Purposes to:
Hon. Joseph T Ortiz, Department S-17*

~~PROPOSED~~ ORDER GRANTING
PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS
ACTION SETTLEMENT

Date: October 24, 2024
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Dept: S-17

~~PROPOSED~~ ORDER GRANTING PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT

1 WHEREAS, the above-entitled action is pending before this Court as a putative class
2 action (the "Action");

3 WHEREAS, Plaintiff Thomas Byler III ("Plaintiff"), individually and on behalf of all
4 others similarly situated and on behalf of the general public have applied to this Court for an order
5 preliminarily approving the settlement of the Action in accordance with the Class Action and
6 Paga Settlement Agreement and Class Notice (the "Settlement" or "Agreement") entered into by
7 Plaintiff and Defendant Crown Castle USA Inc. ("Defendant") which sets forth the terms and
8 conditions for a proposed settlement upon the terms and conditions set forth therein (Plaintiff and
9 Defendant shall be collectively referred to herein as the "Parties"); and

10 WHEREAS, the Court has read and considered Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary
11 Approval of Class Action Settlement.

12 NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED
13 THAT:

14 1. This Order incorporates by reference the definitions in the Settlement attached as
15 Exhibit 1 to the Declaration of Kristy R. Connolly in Support of Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary
16 Approval of Class Action Settlement and all terms defined therein shall have the same meaning in
17 this Order.

18 2. It appears to the Court on a preliminary basis that (a) the Settlement is fair,
19 adequate and reasonable; (b) the Gross Settlement Amount and Net Settlement Amount are fair,
20 adequate and reasonable when balanced against the probable outcome of further litigation relating
21 to liability and damages issues; (c) sufficient investigation and research have been conducted such
22 that counsel for the Parties at this time are able to reasonably evaluate their respective positions;
23 (d) settlement at this time will avoid additional costs by all Parties, as well as avoid the delay and
24 risks that would be presented by the further prosecution of the Action; and (e) the Settlement has
25 been reached as the result of non-collusive, arms-length negotiations.

26 3. With respect to the Class and for purposes of proceeding pursuant to California
27 Code of Civil Procedure § 382 for approval of the settlement only, the Court finds on a
28 preliminary basis that (a) Class Members are ascertainable and so numerous that joinder of all

1 Class Members is impracticable; (b) there are questions of law and fact common to the Class that
2 predominate over any questions affecting only individual Class Members; (c) Plaintiff's claims
3 are typical of the Class' claims; (d) class certification is a superior method for implementing the
4 Settlement and adjudicating this Action in a fair and efficient manner; (e) the Class Representative
5 can fairly and adequately protect the Class' interests; and (f) Class Counsel are qualified to serve
6 as counsel for the Class.

7 4. Accordingly, solely for purposes of effectuating this Settlement, this Court hereby
8 conditionally certifies the class for settlement purposes only. The Class is defined all current and
9 former non-exempt California employees of Defendant at any time during the Class Period of
10 August 29, 2017 through July 16, 2024.

11 5. Plaintiff Thomas Byler III is hereby preliminarily appointed and designated, for all
12 purposes, as the Class Representative and the attorneys of Aegis Law Firm, PC are hereby
13 preliminarily appointed and designated as counsel for the Class ("Class Counsel"). Class Counsel
14 is authorized to act on behalf of the Class Members with respect to all acts or consents required by,
15 or which may be given pursuant to, the Settlement, and such other acts reasonably necessary to
16 consummate the Settlement. Any Class Member may enter an appearance either personally or
17 through counsel of such individual's own choosing and at such individual's own expense. Any
18 Class Member who does not enter an appearance or appear on his or her own will be represented
19 by Class Counsel.

20 6. Should, for whatever reason, the Settlement not become final, the fact that the
21 Parties were willing to stipulate to certification of the Class as part of the Settlement shall have no
22 bearing on, nor be admissible in connection with, the issue of whether a class should be certified in
23 a non-settlement context.

24 7. The Court hereby preliminarily approves the definition and disposition of the Gross
25 Settlement Amount and Net Settlement Amount and related matters provided for in the Settlement,
26 subject to modification at final approval.

27 8. The Court hereby preliminarily approves Class Counsel attorneys' fees of up to one-
28 third of the Gross Settlement Amount, Class Counsel litigation expenses not to exceed \$25,000.00,

1 a Service Award up to \$15,000.00 to Plaintiff, PAGA Penalties in the amount of \$30,000.00, and
2 costs of administration not to exceed \$6,450.00, subject to final approval.

3 9. The Court hereby approves, as to form and content, the Class Notice, to be
4 distributed to Class Members. The Court finds that distribution of the Class Notice, substantially in
5 the manner and form set forth in the Settlement and this Order, meets the requirements of due
6 process, is the best notice practicable under the circumstances, and shall constitute due and
7 sufficient notice to all persons entitled thereto.

8 10. The Court hereby appoints Phoenix as Settlement Administrator and hereby directs
9 the Settlement Administrator to mail or cause to be mailed to Class Members the Class Notice using
10 the procedures set forth in the Settlement Agreement. Class Members who wish to participate in the
11 settlement provided for by the Settlement Agreement do not need to respond to the Class Notice.

12 11. All costs of mailing of the Class Notice, whether foreseen or not, shall be paid
13 from the Class Settlement Amount, including the cost of searching for Class Members' addresses
14 as provided in the Settlement, and all other reasonable costs of the Settlement Administrator up
15 to \$6,450.00 as provided in the Settlement.

16 12. Any Class Member may choose to opt-out of and be excluded from the Class as
17 provided in the Class Notice. Any such person who chooses to opt-out of and be excluded from the
18 Class will not be entitled to any recovery under the Settlement and will not be bound by the
19 Settlement or have any right to object, appeal or comment thereon. Class Members who have not
20 requested exclusion/opted-out shall be deemed Participating Class Members and bound by all
21 determinations of the Court, the Settlement, and the Final Judgment.

22 13. A Final Fairness and Approval Hearing shall be held before this Court on **March 6,**
23 **2025 at 8:30 a.m.** in Department S17 of the Superior Court for the State of California, County of
24 San Bernardino, located at 247 West Third Street, San Bernardino, California 92415. All papers in
25 support of final approval and related awards for fees, costs, and Plaintiff's Service Award must be
26 filed and served at least 16 court days before the final approval hearing.

27 14. Any Participating Class Member must object to the Settlement by following the
28 instructions for submitting written objections that are set forth in the Settlement Agreement and

1 Class Notice, and may appear at the Final Fairness and Approval Hearing. The Court shall retain
2 final authority with respect to the consideration and admissibility of any objections. Any
3 Participating Class Member who objects to the Settlement shall be bound by the order of the Court.

4 15. The Settlement is not a concession or admission, and shall not be used against the
5 Released Parties, as an admission or indication with respect to any claim of any fault or omission
6 by the Released Parties. Whether or not the Settlement is finally approved, neither the Settlement,
7 nor any document, statement, proceeding or conduct related to the Settlement, nor any reports or
8 accounts thereof, shall in any event be construed as, offered or admitted in evidence as, received as
9 or deemed to be evidence of a presumption, concession, indication or admission by Defendant of
10 any liability, fault, wrongdoing, omission, concession or damage in the Action, or in any other
11 action or proceeding, except for purposes of enforcing the Settlement once it receives final approval.

12 16. Pending the Final Approval and Fairness Hearing, all proceedings in this Action,
13 other than proceedings necessary to carry out or enforce the terms of the Settlement and this Order,
14 are hereby stayed.

15 17. Jurisdiction is hereby retained over this Action, the Parties to the Action, and each
16 of the Class Members for all matters relating to this Action, and this Settlement, including
17 (without limitation) all matters relating to the administration, interpretation, effectuation, and/or
18 enforcement of this Settlement and this Order.

19 18. The Court reserves the right to adjourn or continue the date of any hearing and all
20 dates provided for in the Settlement without further notice to Class Members, and retains
21 jurisdiction to consider all further applications arising out of or connected with the proposed
22 Settlement.

23
24 DATED: 10/24/2024

 Corey G. Lee
Honorable ~~Joseph Ortiz~~ Corey G. Lee
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT