

AMENDED CLASS ACTION AND PAGA SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

This Amended Class Action and PAGA Settlement Agreement (“Agreement”) is made by and between Plaintiff Corey Tapia (“Plaintiff”) and Defendant Meritage Homes of California, Inc. (“Meritage”). The Agreement refers to Plaintiff and Meritage collectively as “Parties” or individually as “Party.”

1. DEFINITIONS.

- 1.1 “Action” means the Plaintiff’s lawsuit alleging wage and hour violations against Meritage captioned *Corey Tapia, on behalf of himself and all other similarly situated v. Meritage Homes of California, Inc.*, initiated on December 27, 2022, and pending in Superior Court of the State of California, County of Sacramento, Case No. 34-2022-00331917, and will be amended to include class action allegations in accordance with the Parties’ agreement relating to the same.
- 1.2 “Administrator” means ILYM Group, Inc., the neutral entity the Parties have agreed to appoint to administer the Settlement.
- 1.3 “Administration Expenses Payment” means the amount the Administrator will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount to reimburse its reasonable fees and expenses in accordance with the Administrator’s “not to exceed” bid submitted to the Court in connection with Preliminary Approval of the Settlement.
- 1.1 “Class” means all individuals who are or were employed by Meritage as non-exempt hourly employees and outside sales counselors in California during the Class Period.
- 1.2 “Class Counsel” means Mehrdad Bokhour of Bokhour Law Group, P.C., and Joshua S. Falakassa of Falakassa Law, P.C.
- 1.3 “Class Counsel Fees Payment” and “Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment” means the amounts allocated to Class Counsel for reimbursement of reasonable attorneys’ fees and expenses, respectively, incurred to prosecute the Action.
- 1.4 “Class Data” means the class members’ identifiable information in Meritage’s possession, including each class member’s name, last-known mailing address, social security number, and number of class period workweeks and PAGA pay periods.
- 1.5 “Class Member” or “Settlement Class Member” means a member of the Class, as either a Participating Class Member or Non-Participating Class Member (including a Non-Participating Class Member who qualifies as a PAGA Member).
- 1.6 “Class Member Address Search” means the Administrator’s investigation and search for current Class Member mailing addresses using all reasonably available sources, methods and means including, but not limited to, the National Change of Address database, slip traces, and direct contact by the Administrator with Class Members.

- 1.7 “Class Notice” means the COURT APPROVED NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND HEARING DATE FOR FINAL COURT APPROVAL, to be mailed to Class Members in English in the form, without material variation, attached as Exhibit A and incorporated by reference into this Agreement.
- 1.8 “Class Period” means the period from October 28, 2021, to July 21, 2024.
- 1.9 “Class Representative” means the named Plaintiff in the operative complaint in the Action seeking Court approval to serve as a Class Representative.
- 1.10 “Class Representative Service Payment” means the payment to the Class Representative for initiating the Action and providing services in support of the Action.
- 1.11 “Court” means the Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento.
- 1.12 “Defendant” and/or “Meritage” means Defendant Meritage Homes of California, Inc.
- 1.13 “Defense Counsel” means Edward R. Huguenin, Jessica L. Moran and Ryan P. McGuire of Plante Huguenin Lebovic Kahn, LLP.
- 1.14 “Effective Date” means the later of (a) the last date to appeal final approval and judgment by the Court and no appeal is filed; or (b) if an appeal, review or writ is sought from the Judgment, the day after the Judgment is affirmed or the appeal, review or writ is dismissed or denied, and the Judgment is no longer subject to further judicial review.
- 1.15 “Final Approval” means the Court’s order granting final approval of the Settlement.
- 1.16 “Final Approval Hearing” means the Court’s hearing on the Motion for Final Approval of the Settlement.
- 1.17 “Final Judgment” means the Judgment Entered by the Court upon Granting Final Approval of the Settlement.
- 1.18 “Gross Settlement Amount” means \$400,000, which is the total settlement amount to be paid under the Settlement except as provided in Paragraph 10 below. The Gross Settlement Amount will be used to pay Individual Class Payments, Individual PAGA Payments, the LWDA PAGA Payment, Class Counsel Fees, Class Counsel Expenses, Class Representative Service Payment, and the Administrator’s Expenses. Employer-side payroll taxes shall be separately paid and are not included in the Gross Settlement Amount. The Settlement is non-reversionary.
- 1.19 “Individual Class Payment” means the Participating Class Member’s pro rata share of the Net Settlement Amount calculated according to the number of Workweeks worked during the Class Period.

- 1.20 “Individual PAGA Payment” means the PAGA Member’s pro rata share of 25% of the PAGA Penalties calculated according to the number of Workweeks worked during the PAGA Period.
- 1.21 “Judgment” means the judgment entered by the Court based upon the Final Approval.
- 1.22 “LWDA” means the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, the agency entitled, under Labor Code section 2699, subd. (i).
- 1.23 “LWDA PAGA Payment” means the 75% of the PAGA Penalties paid to the LWDA under Labor Code section 2699, subd. (i).
- 1.24 “Net Settlement Amount” means the Gross Settlement Amount, less the following payments in the amounts approved by the Court: Individual PAGA Payments, the LWDA PAGA Payment, Class Representative Service Payment, Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, and the Administration Expenses Payment. The Net Settlement Amount is to be paid to Participating Class Members as Individual Class Payments.
- 1.25 “Non-Participating Class Member” means any Class Member who opts out of the Settlement by sending the Administrator a valid and timely Request for Exclusion.
- 1.26 “PAGA Member” means all individuals who are or were employed by Meritage as non-exempt hourly employees and outside sales counselors in California during the PAGA Period.
- 1.27 “PAGA Pay Period” means any Pay Period during which a PAGA Member worked for Meritage for at least one day during the PAGA Period.
- 1.28 “PAGA Period” means the period from October 28, 2021, to July 21, 2024.
- 1.29 “PAGA” means the Private Attorneys General Act (Labor Code §§ 2698. et seq.).
- 1.30 “PAGA Notice” means Plaintiff’s January 18, 2023 letter to Meritage and the LWDA providing notice pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, subd.(a).
- 1.31 “PAGA Penalties” means the total amount of PAGA civil penalties to be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, allocated 25% to the PAGA Members (\$2,500) and 75% to the LWDA (\$7,500) in settlement of the PAGA claims.
- 1.32 “Participating Class Member” means a Class Member who does not submit a valid and timely Request for Exclusion from the Settlement.
- 1.33 “Plaintiff” means Corey Tapia, the named Plaintiff in the Action.
- 1.34 “Preliminary Approval” means the Court’s Order Granting Preliminary Approval of the Settlement.

- 1.35 "Preliminary Approval Order" means the proposed Order Granting Preliminary Approval and Approval of PAGA Settlement.
- 1.36 "Released Class Claims" means the claims being released as described in Paragraph 5.2 below.
- 1.37 "Released PAGA Claims" means the claims being released as described in Paragraph 5.3 below.
- 1.38 "Released Parties" means Meritage Homes of California, Inc., and any of its former and present parents, subsidiaries, and affiliates.
- 1.39 "Request for Exclusion" means a Class Member's submission of a written request to be excluded from the Class Settlement signed by the Class Member.
- 1.40 "Response Deadline" means 45 days after the Administrator mails Notice to Class Members and PAGA Members and shall be the last date on which Class Members may: (a) fax, email, or mail Requests for Exclusion from the Settlement, or (b) fax, email, or mail his or her Objection to the Settlement. Class Members to whom Notice Packets are resent after having been returned undeliverable to the Administrator shall have an additional 14 calendar days beyond the Response Deadline has expired.
- 1.41 "Settlement" means the disposition of the Action effected by this Agreement and the Judgment.
- 1.42 "Workweek" means any week during which a Class Member worked for Meritage for at least one day during the Class Period.

2. RECITALS.

- 2.1 On December 27, 2022, Plaintiff filed suit in Sacramento Superior Court, asserting claims based on Meritage's alleged: (1) failure to pay overtime wages; (2) failure to pay sick time wages; (3) failure to provide meal periods; (4) failure to provide rest breaks; (5) failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements; (6) failure to pay all wages due upon separation of employment; (7) failure to reimburse for necessary business expenses, and (8) violation of California's Unfair Competition Law ("UCL"). On July 26, 2024, Plaintiff filed a Second Amended Complaint, adding class action allegations for (1) failure to pay all overtime wages, (2) meal period violations, (3) rest period violations, (4) failure to pay all sick time, (5) wage statement violations, (6) waiting time penalties, (7) failure to reimburse necessary business expenses, (8) unfair competition, and (9) PAGA penalties.
- 2.2 On April 4, 2023, Meritage timely answered the Complaint, denying the claims and asserting various affirmative defenses.
- 2.3 Pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, subd.(a), Plaintiff gave timely written notice to Meritage and the LWDA by sending the PAGA Notice.

- 2.4 On May 21, 2024, the Parties participated in an all-day mediation presided over by Lynn Frank, Esq., which led to this Agreement to settle the Action.
- 2.5 Prior to mediation, Plaintiff obtained, through informal discovery, the time and corresponding pay records for the putative Class Members, relevant Meritage policies, Plaintiff's time and payroll records and wage statements, and the total number of Class Periods Employees and workweeks worked during the Class Period.
- 2.6 The Court has not granted class certification.
- 2.7 The Parties, Class Counsel and Defense Counsel represent that they are not aware of any other pending matter or action asserting claims that will be extinguished or affected by the Settlement. Plaintiff has filed an individual claim for discrimination/wrongful termination that is being disposed of via a separate settlement agreement.

3. MONETARY TERMS.

- 3.1 Gross Settlement Amount. Except as otherwise provided by Paragraph 10 below, \$400,000, and no more, will be paid as the Gross Settlement Amount. Any and all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portions of the Individual Class Payments will be separately paid outside of the Gross Settlement Amount. There is no obligation to pay the Gross Settlement Amount (or any payroll taxes) prior to the deadline stated in Paragraph 4.3 of this Agreement. The Administrator will disburse the entire Gross Settlement Amount without asking or requiring Participating Class Members or PAGA Members to submit any claim as a condition of payment. None of the Gross Settlement Amount will revert to Meritage.
- 3.2 Payments from the Gross Settlement Amount. The Administrator will make and deduct the following payments from the Gross Settlement Amount, in the amounts specified by the Court in the Final Approval Order:
 - 3.2.1 To Plaintiff: Class Representative Service Payment to the Class Representative of not more than \$10,000 (in addition to any Individual Class Payment and any Individual PAGA Payment the Class Representative is entitled to receive as a Participating Class Member). Meritage will not oppose Plaintiff's request for a Class Representative Service Payment that does not exceed this amount. As part of the motion for Class Counsel Fees Payment and Class Litigation Expenses Payment, Plaintiff will seek Court approval for any Class Representative Service Payments by no later than 16 court days prior to the Final Approval Hearing. If the Court approves a Class Representative Service Payment less than the amount requested, the Administrator will retain the remainder in the Net Settlement Amount. The Administrator will pay the Class Representative Service Payment using IRS Form 1099. Plaintiff assumes full responsibility and liability for employee taxes owed on the Class Representative Service Payment.

- 3.2.2 To Class Counsel: A Class Counsel Fees Payment of not more than \$133,333.33 (representing 33.33% of the Gross Settlement Amount), and a Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment of not more than \$25,000. Meritage will not oppose requests for these payments provided that they do not exceed these amounts. Plaintiff and/or Class Counsel will file a motion for Class Counsel Fees Payment and Class Litigation Expenses Payment no later than 16 court days prior to the Final Approval Hearing. If the Court approves a Class Counsel Fees Payment and/or a Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment less than the amounts requested, the Administrator will allocate the remainder to the Net Settlement Amount. Released Parties shall have no liability to Class Counsel or any other Plaintiff's Counsel arising from any claim to any portion any Class Counsel Fee Payment and/or Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment. The Administrator will pay the Class Counsel Fees Payment and Class Counsel Expenses Payment using one or more IRS 1099 Forms. Class Counsel assumes full responsibility and liability for taxes owed on the Class Counsel Fees Payment and the Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment and holds Meritage harmless, and indemnifies Meritage, from any dispute or controversy regarding any division or sharing of any of these Payments.
- 3.2.3 To the Administrator: An Administrator Expenses Payment not to exceed \$6,000 except for a showing of good cause and as approved by the Court. To the extent the Administration Expenses are less, or the Court approves payment of less than \$6,000, the Administrator will retain the remainder in the Net Settlement Amount.
- 3.2.4 To Each Participating Class Member: An Individual Class Payment is calculated by (a) dividing the Net Settlement Amount by the total number of Workweeks worked by all Participating Class Members during the Class Period and (b) multiplying the result by each Participating Class Member's Workweeks.
- 3.2.4.1 Tax Allocation of Individual Class Payments. 20% of each Participating Class Member's Individual Class Payment will be allocated to settlement of wage claims (the "Wage Portion"). The Wage Portions are subject to tax withholding and will be reported on an IRS W-2 Form. 80% of each Participating Class Member's Individual Class Payment will be allocated to settlement of claims for all interest and penalties (the "Non-Wage Portion"). The Non-Wage Portions are not subject to wage withholdings and will be reported on IRS 1099 Forms. Participating Class Members assume full responsibility and liability for any employee taxes owed on their Individual Class Payment.
- 3.2.5 Effect of Non-Participating Class Members on Calculation of Individual Class Payments. Non-Participating Class Members will not receive any Individual Class Payments. The Administrator will retain amounts equal to their

Individual Class Payments in the Net Settlement Amount for distribution to Participating Class Members on a pro rata basis according to their respective workweeks.

3.2.6 To the LWDA and Covered Employees: PAGA Penalties in the amount of \$10,000 will be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, with 75% allocated to the LWDA PAGA Payment and 25% allocated to the Individual PAGA Payments.

3.2.6.1 The Administrator will calculate each Individual PAGA Payment by dividing the amount of the PAGA Member's 25% share of PAGA Penalties (\$2,500) by the total number of PAGA Period Pay Periods worked by all PAGA Members during the PAGA Period and (b) multiplying the result by each PAGA Member's PAGA Period Pay Periods. PAGA Members assume full responsibility and liability for any taxes owed on their Individual PAGA Payment.

3.2.6.2 If the Court approves PAGA Penalties of less than the amount requested, the Administrator will allocate the remainder to the Net Settlement Amount. The Administrator will report the Individual PAGA Payments on IRS 1099 Forms.

4. SETTLEMENT FUNDING AND PAYMENTS.

4.1 Class Workweeks and PAGA Member Pay Periods. Based on a review of its records to date, Meritage estimates there are 83 Class Members who collectively worked a total of 7,600 Workweeks.

4.2 Class Data. No later than fourteen (14) days after the Court grants Preliminary Approval of the Settlement, Meritage will deliver the Class Data to the Administrator in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. To protect Class Members' privacy rights, the Administrator must maintain the Class Data in confidence, use the Class Data only for purposes of this Settlement and for no other purpose, and restrict access to the Class Data to Administrator employees who need access to the Class Data to effect and perform under this Agreement. Meritage has a continuing duty to immediately notify Class Counsel if it discovers that the Class Data omitted class member identifying information and to provide corrected or updated Class Data as soon as reasonably feasible. Without any extension of the deadline by which Meritage must send the Class Data to the Administrator, the Parties and their counsel will expeditiously use best efforts, in good faith, to reconstruct or otherwise resolve any issues related to missing or omitted Class Data.

4.3 Funding of Gross Settlement Amount. The Settlement Administrator will provide wire transfer information within three (3) days after the Effective Date. The Gross Settlement Amount shall be fully funded by transmitting the funds to the Administrator no later than thirty (30) court days after the Settlement Administrator provides wire transfer information.

- 4.4 Payments from the Gross Settlement Amount. Within ten days after the Gross Settlement Amount is funded, the Administrator will mail checks for all Individual Class Payments, all Individual PAGA Payments, the LWDA PAGA Payment, the Administration Expenses Payment, the Class Counsel Fees Payment, the Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, and the Class Representative Service Payment. Disbursement of the Class Counsel Fees Payment, the Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment and the Class Representative Service Payment shall not precede disbursement of Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments.
- 4.4.1 The Administrator will issue checks for the Individual Class Payments and/or Individual PAGA Payments and send them to the Class Members via First Class U.S. Mail, postage prepaid. The face of each check shall prominently state the date (not less than 180 days after the date of mailing) when the check will be voided. The Administrator will cancel all checks not cashed by the void date. The Administrator will send checks for Individual Settlement Payments to all Participating Class Members (including those for whom Class Notice was returned undelivered). The Administrator will send checks for Individual PAGA Payments to all PAGA Members including Non-Participating Class Members who qualify as PAGA Members (including those for whom Class Notice was returned undelivered). The Administrator may send Participating Class Members a single check combining the Individual Class Payment and the Individual PAGA Payment. Before mailing any checks, the Settlement Administrator must update the recipients' mailing addresses using the National Change of Address Database.
- 4.4.2 The Administrator must conduct a Class Member Address Search for all other Class Members whose checks are returned undelivered without a USPS forwarding address. Within seven days of receiving a returned check the Administrator must re-mail checks to the USPS forwarding address provided or to an address ascertained through the Class Member Address Search. The Administrator need not take further steps to deliver checks to Class Members whose re-mailed checks are returned as undelivered. The Administrator shall promptly send a replacement check to any Class Member whose original check was lost or misplaced, requested by the Class Member prior to the void date.
- 4.4.3 For any Class Member whose Individual Class Payment check or Individual PAGA Payment check is uncashed and cancelled after the void date, the Administrator shall transmit the funds represented by such checks to the California Controller's Unclaimed Property Fund in the name of the Class Member thereby leaving no "unpaid residue" subject to the requirements of California Code of Civil Procedure Section 384, subd. (b).
- 4.4.4 The payment of Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments shall not obligate Meritage to confer any additional benefits or make any additional payments to Class Members (such as 401(k) contributions or bonuses) beyond those specified in this Agreement.

5. **RELEASES OF CLAIMS.** Effective on the date when the entire Gross Settlement Amount and all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portion of the Individual Class Payments are fully funded, Plaintiff, Class Members, and Class Counsel will release claims against all Released Parties as follows:

- 5.1 Release by Plaintiff. In consideration of Plaintiff's awarded Class Representative Service Payment, Plaintiff's Individual Class Payment, and the other terms and conditions of the Settlement, as of the date the Settlement becomes Final and is fully funded, Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and his respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, releases the Released Parties from any and all claims, rights, demands, liabilities, and causes of action, whether known or unknown, arising from the same set of operative facts as those alleged in the operative complaints, the consolidated complaint, or the applicable LWDA letters, including those claims which could have been asserted based on the facts alleged in the operative complaints, the consolidated complaint, or LWDA letters, through the Release Period. Expressly excluded from Plaintiff's release are any claims for workers' compensation benefits, unemployment insurance benefits, and any other claims that cannot be released by law.
- 5.2 Release by Participating Class Members All Participating Class Members, on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, release Released Parties from (i) all claims, rights, demands, liabilities, penalties, and causes of action that were alleged, or reasonably could have been alleged, based on the Class Period facts stated in the Operative Complaint and ascertained in the course of the Action.
- 5.3 Release by PAGA Members. All PAGA Members are deemed to release, on behalf of themselves and their respective former and present representatives, agents, attorneys, heirs, administrators, successors, and assigns, the Released Parties from all claims for PAGA penalties that were alleged, or reasonably could have been alleged, based on the PAGA Period facts stated in the Operative Complaint and the PAGA Notice and ascertained in the course of the Action.
- 5.3 With respect to the Plaintiff's Released Claims only, the Parties stipulate and agree that the Plaintiff shall have, by operation of the judgment and approval order entered by the Court, waived and relinquished, to the fullest extent permitted by law, the provisions, rights, and benefits of section 1542 of the California Civil Code, which provides:

A GENERAL RELEASE DOES NOT EXTEND TO CLAIMS THAT THE CREDITOR OR RELEASING PARTY DOES NOT KNOW OR SUSPECT TO EXIST IN HIS OR HER FAVOR AT THE TIME OF EXECUTING THE RELEASE AND THAT, IF KNOWN BY HIM OR HER, WOULD HAVE MATERIALLY AFFECTED HIS OR HER SETTLEMENT WITH THE DEBTOR OR RELEASED PARTY.

The Plaintiff shall be deemed to have acknowledged that this Settlement Agreement is intended to waive and release all released claims that he does not know or suspect to exist in his favor at the time of the approval of this Settlement Agreement.

6. **MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL.** Within a reasonable time, Plaintiff will move for an order giving preliminary approval of the Settlement (“Motion for Preliminary Approval”) that complies with the Court’s current checklist for Preliminary Approvals.

6.1 **Plaintiff’s Responsibilities.** Plaintiff will prepare and deliver to Defense Counsel a draft proposed Order Granting Preliminary Approval and Approval of PAGA Settlement and a draft proposed Class Notice.

6.2 **Responsibilities of Counsel.** Class Counsel is responsible for expeditiously finalizing and filing the Motion for Preliminary Approval no later than 45 days after the full execution of this Agreement; obtaining a prompt hearing date for the Motion for Preliminary Approval; and for appearing in Court to advocate in favor of the Motion for Preliminary Approval. Class Counsel is responsible for delivering the Court’s Preliminary Approval order to the Administrator.

6.3 **Duty to Cooperate.** If the Parties disagree on any aspect of the proposed Motion for Preliminary Approval and/or the supporting declarations and documents, Class Counsel and Defense Counsel will expeditiously work together on behalf of the Parties by meeting in person or by telephone, and in good faith, to resolve the disagreement. If the Court does not grant Preliminary Approval or conditions Preliminary Approval on any material change to this Agreement, Class Counsel and Defense Counsel will expeditiously work together on behalf of the Parties by meeting in person or by telephone, and in good faith, to modify the Agreement and otherwise satisfy the Court’s concerns.

7. **SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION.**

7.1 **Selection of Administrator.** The Parties have jointly selected ILYM Group, Inc. to serve as the Administrator and verified that, as a condition of appointment, ILYM agrees to be bound by this Agreement and to perform, as a fiduciary, all duties specified in this Agreement in exchange for payment of Administration Expenses. The Parties and their Counsel represent that they have no interest or relationship, financial or otherwise, with the Administrator other than a professional relationship arising out of prior experiences administering settlements.

7.2 **Employer Identification Number.** The Administrator shall have and use its own Employer Identification Number for purposes of calculating payroll tax withholdings and providing reports to state and federal tax authorities.

7.3 **Qualified Settlement Fund.** The Administrator shall establish a settlement fund that meets the requirements of a Qualified Settlement Fund under U.S. Treasury Regulation section 468B-1.

7.4 Notice to Class Members.

- 7.4.1 No later than three (3) business days after receipt of the Class Data, the Administrator shall notify Class Counsel that the list has been received and state the number of Class Members, PAGA Members, Workweeks, and Pay Periods in the Class Data.
- 7.4.2 Using best efforts to perform as soon as possible, and in no event later than 15 days after receiving the Class Data, the Administrator will send to all Class Members identified in the Class Data, via first-class United States Postal Service (“USPS”) mail, the Class Notice substantially in the form attached to this Agreement as Exhibit A. The first page of the Class Notice shall prominently estimate the dollar amounts of any Individual Class Payment and/or Individual PAGA Payment payable to the Class Member, and the number of Workweeks and PAGA Pay Periods (if applicable) used to calculate these amounts. Before mailing Class Notices, the Administrator shall update Class Member addresses using the National Change of Address database.
- 7.4.3 Not later than 5 business days after the Administrator’s receipt of any Class Notice returned by the USPS as undelivered, the Administrator shall re-mail the Class Notice using any forwarding address provided by the USPS. If the USPS does not provide a forwarding address, the Administrator shall conduct a Class Member Address Search, and re-mail the Class Notice to the most current address obtained. The Administrator has no obligation to make further attempts to locate or send Class Notice to Class Members whose Class Notice is returned by the USPS a second time.
- 7.4.4 The deadlines for Class Members’ written objections, Challenges to Workweeks and/or Pay Periods, and Requests for Exclusion will be extended an additional 14 days beyond the 45 days otherwise provided in the Class Notice for all Class Members whose notice is re-mailed. The Administrator will inform the Class Member of the extended deadline with the re-mailed Class Notice.
- 7.4.5 If the Administrator, Meritage or Class Counsel is contacted by or otherwise discovers any persons who believe they should have been included in the Class Data and should have received Class Notice, the Parties will expeditiously meet and confer in person or by telephone, and in good faith in an effort to agree on whether to include them as Class Members. If the Parties agree, such persons will be Class Members entitled to the same rights as other Class Members, and the Administrator will send, via email or overnight delivery, a Class Notice requiring them to exercise options under this Agreement not later than 14 days after receipt of Class Notice, or the deadline dates in the Class Notice, whichever are later.

7.5 Requests for Exclusion (Opt-Outs)

- 7.5.1 Class Members who wish to exclude themselves from (opt-out of) the Class Settlement must send the Administrator, by fax, email, or mail, a signed written Request for Exclusion not later than 45 days after the Administrator mails the Class Notice (plus an additional 14 days for Class Members whose Class Notice is re-mailed). A Request for Exclusion is a letter from a Class Member or his/her representative that reasonably communicates the Class Member's election to be excluded from the Settlement and includes the Class Member's name, address and email address or telephone number. To be valid, a Request for Exclusion must be timely faxed, emailed, or postmarked by the Response Deadline.
- 7.5.2 The Administrator may not reject a Request for Exclusion as invalid because it fails to contain all the information specified in the Class Notice. The Administrator shall accept any Request for Exclusion as valid if the Administrator can reasonably ascertain the identity of the person as a Class Member and the Class Member's desire to be excluded. The Administrator's determination shall be final and not appealable or otherwise susceptible to challenge. If the Administrator has reason to question the authenticity of a Request for Exclusion, the Administrator may demand additional proof of the Class Member's identity. The Administrator's determination of authenticity shall be final and not appealable or otherwise susceptible to challenge.
- 7.5.3 Every Class Member who does not submit a timely and valid Request for Exclusion is deemed to be a Participating Class Member under this Agreement, entitled to all benefits and bound by all terms and conditions of the Settlement, including the Participating Class Members' Release under Paragraph 5.2 of this Agreement, regardless of whether the Participating Class Member actually receives the Class Notice or objects to the Settlement.
- 7.5.4 Every Class Member who submits a valid and timely Request for Exclusion is a Non-Participating Class Member and shall not receive an Individual Class Payment or have the right to object to the class action components of the Settlement. Because future PAGA claims are subject to claim preclusion upon entry of the Judgment, Non-Participating Class Members who are PAGA Members are deemed to release the claims identified in Paragraph 5.3 of this Agreement and are eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment.
- 7.5.5 Requests for Exclusion (Opt-outs) and Exclusion List. The Administrator will promptly review Requests for Exclusion on a rolling basis to ascertain their validity. Not later than 10 days after the expiration of the deadline for submitting Requests for Exclusion, the Administrator shall email a list to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel containing (a) the names and other identifying information of Class Members who have timely submitted valid Requests for Exclusion ("Exclusion List"); (b) the names and other identifying information of Class Members who have submitted invalid Requests for Exclusion; (c)

copies of all Requests for Exclusion from Settlement submitted (whether valid or invalid).

- 7.6 Challenges to Calculation of Workweeks. Each Class Member shall have 45 days after the Administrator mails the Class Notice (plus an additional 14 days for Class Members whose Class Notice is re-mailed) to challenge the number of Class Workweeks and PAGA Pay Periods (if any) allocated to the Class Member in the Class Notice. The Class Member may challenge the allocation by communicating with the Administrator via fax, email or mail. The Administrator must encourage the challenging Class Member to submit supporting documentation. In the absence of any contrary documentation, the Administrator is entitled to presume that the Workweeks contained in the Class Notice are correct so long as they are consistent with the Class Data. The Administrator's determination of each Class Member's allocation of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods shall be final and not appealable or otherwise susceptible to challenge. The Administrator shall promptly provide copies of all challenges to calculation of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods to Defense Counsel and Class Counsel and the Administrator's determination of the challenges.
- 7.7 Objections to Settlement.
- 7.7.1 Only Participating Class Members may object to the class action components of the Settlement and/or this Agreement, including contesting the fairness of the Settlement, and/or amounts requested for the Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment and/or Class Representative Service Payment.
- 7.7.2 Participating Class Members may send written objections to the Administrator, by fax, email, or mail. In the alternative, Participating Class Members may appear in Court (or hire an attorney to appear in Court) to present verbal objections at the Final Approval Hearing. A Participating Class Member who elects to send a written objection to the Administrator must do so not later than 45 days after the Administrator's mailing of the Class Notice (plus an additional 14 days for Class Members whose Class Notice was re-mailed).
- 7.7.3 Non-Participating Class Members have no right to object to any of the class action components of the Settlement.
- 7.8 Administrator Duties. The Administrator has a duty to perform or observe all tasks to be performed or observed by the Administrator contained in this Agreement or otherwise.
- 7.8.1 Website, Email Address and Toll-Free Number. The Administrator will establish and maintain and use an internet website to post information of interest to Class Members including the date, time and location for the Final Approval Hearing and copies of the Settlement Agreement, Motion for Preliminary Approval, the Preliminary Approval order, the Class Notice, the

Motion for Final Approval, the Motion for Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment and Class Representative Service Payment, the Final Approval order and the Judgment. The Administrator will also maintain and monitor an email address and a toll-free telephone number to receive Class Member calls, faxes and emails.

- 7.8.2 Weekly Reports. The Administrator must, on a weekly basis, provide written reports to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel that, among other things, tally the number of: Class Notices mailed or re-mailed, Class Notices returned undelivered, Requests for Exclusion (whether valid or invalid) received, objections received, challenges to Workweeks and/or Pay Periods received and/or resolved, and checks mailed for Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments (“Weekly Report”). The Weekly Reports must include provide the Administrator’s assessment of the validity of Requests for Exclusion and attach copies of all Requests for Exclusion and objections received.
- 7.8.3 Workweek and/or Pay Period Challenges. The Administrator has the authority to address and make final decisions consistent with the terms of this Agreement on all Class Member challenges over the calculation of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods. The Administrator’s decision shall be final and not appealable or otherwise susceptible to challenge.
- 7.8.4 Administrator’s Declaration. Not later than 14 days before the date by which Plaintiff is required to file the Motion for Final Approval of the Settlement, the Administrator will provide to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel, a signed declaration suitable for filing in Court attesting to its due diligence and compliance with all of its obligations under this Agreement, including, but not limited to, its mailing of Class Notice, the Class Notices returned as undelivered, the re-mailing of Class Notices, attempts to locate Class Members, the total number of Requests for Exclusion from Settlement it received (both valid or invalid), the number of written objections and attach the Exclusion List. The Administrator will supplement its declaration as needed or requested by the Parties and/or the Court. Class Counsel is responsible for filing the Administrator’s declaration(s) in Court.
- 7.8.5 Final Report by Settlement Administrator. Within 10 days after the Administrator disburses all funds in the Gross Settlement Amount, the Administrator will provide Class Counsel and Defense Counsel with a final report detailing its disbursements by employee identification number only of all payments made under this Agreement. At least 15 days before any deadline set by the Court, the Administrator will prepare, and submit to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel, a signed declaration suitable for filing in Court attesting to its disbursement of all payments required under this Agreement. Class Counsel is responsible for filing the Administrator's declaration in Court.

8. **ESCALATOR CLAUSE.** It has been estimated that the actual weeks worked by the Settlement Class through the mediation date is approximately 7,600 workweeks. Additionally, if the number of workweeks is more than 10% greater than the figures set forth in Paragraph 3 (i.e., more than 8,360 workweeks), Meritage shall increase the Gross Settlement Amount on a proportional basis that reflects the percentage over 10%.
9. **MERITAGE'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW.** If 25% or more of the Class Members, or a number of Class Members whose Individual Settlement Shares represent ten percent (10%) or more of the total of all Individual Settlement Shares, validly elect not to participate in the Settlement, Meritage will have the right to rescind the Settlement, and the Settlement and all actions taken in its furtherance will be null and void. Meritage must exercise this right within 15 days after the Settlement Administrator notifies the parties of the number of opt-outs, which the Settlement Administrator will do within 10 days after the deadline for submission of opt-outs. If Meritage exercises the right to rescind, it will be responsible for the costs of administration of the Settlement incurred through that time.
10. **MOTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL.** Not later than 16 court days before the scheduled Final Approval Hearing, Plaintiff will file in Court, a motion for final approval of the Settlement that includes a request for approval of the PAGA settlement under Labor Code section 2699, subd. (l), a Proposed Final Approval Order and a proposed Judgment (collectively "Motion for Final Approval").
 - 10.1 **Response to Objections.** Each Party retains the right to respond to any objection raised by a Participating Class Member, including the right to file responsive documents in Court no later than five court days prior to the Final Approval Hearing, or as otherwise ordered or accepted by the Court.
 - 10.2 **Duty to Cooperate.** If the Court does not grant Final Approval or conditions Final Approval on any material change to the Settlement (including, but not limited to, the scope of release to be granted by Class Members), the Parties will expeditiously work together in good faith to attempt to address the Court's concerns. The Court's decision to award less than the amounts requested for the Class Representative Service Payment, Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment and/or Administrator Expenses Payment shall not constitute a material modification to the Agreement within the meaning of this paragraph.
 - 10.3 **Continuing Jurisdiction of the Court.** The Parties agree that, after entry of Judgment, the Court will retain jurisdiction over the Parties, Action, and the Settlement solely for purposes of (i) enforcing this Agreement and/or Judgment, (ii) addressing settlement administration matters, and (iii) addressing such post-Judgment matters as are permitted by law.
 - 10.4 **Waiver of Right to Appeal.** The parties waive all appeals from the final approval of the Settlement unless the Court materially modifies the Settlement, except that Plaintiff and Class Counsel may appeal from an order by the Court that materially reduces the amounts sought for the Class Representative Payment or the Class Counsel Fees or Expenses Payment. Such an order or affirmance of such an order will

not entitle Plaintiff or the Class to avoid the Settlement. Meritage's payment obligation under the Settlement will be suspended pending an appeal of the Judgment.

- 10.5 Appellate Court Orders to Vacate, Reverse, or Materially Modify Judgment. If the reviewing Court vacates, reverses, or modifies the Judgment in a manner that requires a material modification of this Agreement (including, but not limited to, the scope of release to be granted by Class Members), this Agreement shall be null and void. The Parties shall nevertheless expeditiously work together in good faith to attempt to address the appellate court's concerns, sharing, on a 50-50 basis, any additional Administration Expenses reasonably incurred after remittitur. An appellate decision to vacate, reverse, or modify the Court's award of the Class Representative Service Payment or any payments to Class Counsel shall not constitute a material modification of the Judgment within the meaning of this paragraph, as long as the Gross Settlement Amount remains unchanged
11. **AMENDED JUDGMENT.** If an amended judgment is required under Code of Civil Procedure section 384, the Parties will work together in good faith to jointly submit a proposed amended judgment.
12. **ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS.**
- 12.1 No Admission of Liability, Class Certification or Representative Manageability for Other Purposes. This Agreement represents a compromise and settlement of highly disputed claims. Nothing in this Agreement is intended or should be construed as an admission by Meritage that any of the allegations in the Operative Complaint have merit or that Meritage has any liability for any claims asserted; nor should it be intended or construed as an admission by Plaintiff that Meritage's defenses in the Action have merit. The Parties agree that class certification and representative treatment is for purposes of this Settlement only. If, for any reason the Court does grant Preliminary Approval, Final Approval or enter Judgment, Meritage reserves the right to contest certification of any class for any reasons, and Meritage reserves all available defenses to the claims in the Action, and Plaintiff reserves the right to move for class certification on any grounds available and to contest Meritage's defenses. The Settlement, this Agreement and the Parties' willingness to settle the Action will have no bearing on, and will not be admissible in connection with, any litigation (except for proceedings to enforce or effectuate the Settlement and this Agreement).
- 12.2 No Solicitation. The Parties separately agree that they and their respective counsel and employees will not solicit any Class Member to opt out of or object to the Settlement, or appeal from the Judgment. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to restrict Class Counsel's ability to communicate with Class Members in accordance with Class Counsel's ethical obligations owed to Class Members.
- 12.3 Integrated Agreement. Upon execution by all Parties and their counsel, this Agreement together with its attached exhibits shall constitute the entire agreement between the Parties relating to the Settlement, superseding any and all oral representations, warranties, covenants, or inducements made to or by any Party.

- 12.4 Attorney Authorization. Class Counsel and Defense Counsel separately warrant and represent that they are authorized by Plaintiff and Meritage, respectively, to take all appropriate action required or permitted to be taken by such Parties pursuant to this Agreement to effectuate its terms, and to execute any other documents reasonably required to effectuate the terms of this Agreement including any amendments to this Agreement.
- 12.5 Cooperation. The Parties and their counsel will cooperate with each other and use their best efforts, in good faith, to implement the Settlement by, among other things, modifying the Settlement Agreement as agreed by the Parties, submitting supplemental evidence and supplementing points and authorities as requested by the Court. In the event the Parties are unable to agree upon the form or content of any document necessary to implement the Settlement, or on any modification of the Agreement that may become necessary to implement the Settlement, the Parties will seek the assistance of a mediator and/or the Court for resolution.
- 12.6 No Prior Assignments. The Parties separately represent and warrant that they have not directly or indirectly assigned, transferred, encumbered, or purported to assign, transfer, or encumber to any person or entity and portion of any liability, claim, demand, action, cause of action, or right released and discharged by the Party in this Settlement.
- 12.7 No Tax Advice. Neither Plaintiff, Class Counsel, Meritage nor Defense Counsel are providing any advice regarding taxes or taxability, nor shall anything in this Settlement be relied upon as such within the meaning of United States Treasury Department Circular 230 (31 CFR Part 10, as amended) or otherwise.
- 12.8 Modification of Agreement. This Agreement, and all parts of it, may be amended, modified, changed, or waived only by an express written instrument signed by all Parties or their representatives, and approved by the Court.
- 12.9 Agreement Binding on Successors. This Agreement will be binding upon, and inure to the benefit of, the successors of each of the Parties.
- 12.10 Applicable Law. All terms and conditions of this Agreement and its exhibits will be governed by and interpreted according to the internal laws of the state of California, without regard to conflict of law principles.
- 12.11 Cooperation in Drafting. The Parties have cooperated in the drafting and preparation of this Agreement. This Agreement will not be construed against any Party on the basis that the Party was the drafter or participated in the drafting.
- 12.12 Confidentiality. Plaintiff and his attorneys agree not to issue any press or other media releases or talk to the press or media regarding the Settlement, and Plaintiff's attorneys agree not to publicize the Settlement on their website or social media. In addition, prior to filing of the Motion for Preliminary Approval, Plaintiff and his attorneys will not have any communication with anyone other than family members, clients, Class

Members, financial advisors, retained experts, and vendors related to settlement administration, regarding the Settlement. If, before the filing of the Motion for Preliminary Approval, Plaintiff or his attorneys disclose to any unauthorized party (a) that a settlement has been reached or (b) any of the terms of the Settlement except as required by law or to effect the Settlement, Meritage may rescind the Settlement, rendering it null and void.

- 12.13 Use and Return of Class Data. Information provided to Class Counsel pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence, Rule 408, and/or Cal. Evid. Code §1152, and all copies and summaries of the Class Data provided to Class Counsel by Meritage in connection with the mediation, other settlement negotiations, or in connection with the Settlement, may be used only with respect to this Settlement, and no other purpose, and may not be used in any way that violates any existing contractual agreement, statute, or rule of court. Not later than 90 days after the date when the Court discharges the Administrator's obligation to provide a Declaration confirming the final pay out of all Settlement funds, Plaintiff shall destroy all paper and electronic versions of Class Data received from Meritage unless, prior to the Court's discharge of the Administrator's obligation, Meritage makes a written request to Class Counsel for the return, rather than the destruction of, Class Data.
- 12.14 Headings. The descriptive heading of any section or paragraph of this Agreement is inserted for convenience of reference only and does not constitute a part of this Agreement.
- 12.15 Calendar Days. Unless otherwise noted, all reference to "days" in this Agreement shall be to calendar days. In the event any date or deadline set forth in this Agreement falls on a weekend or federal legal holiday, such date or deadline shall be on the first business day thereafter:
- 12.16 Notice. All notices, demands or other communications between the Parties in connection with this Agreement will be in writing and deemed to have been duly given as of the third business day after mailing by United States mail, or the day sent by email or messenger, addressed as follows:

To Plaintiff and the Settlement Class:

Joshua S. Falakassa
josh@falakassalaw.com
FALAKASSA LAW, P.C.
1901 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 450
Los Angeles, California 90067

Mehrdad Bokhour
mehrdad@bokhourlaw.com
BOKHOUR LAW GROUP, P.C.
1901 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 450
Los Angeles, California 90067

To Meritage:

Edward R. Huguenin
ehuguenin@phlklaw.com
Jessica L. Moran
jmoran@phlklaw.com
Ryan P. McGuire
rmcguire@phlklaw.com

PLANTE HUGUENIN LEBOVIC KAHN LLP
3001 Lava Ride Court, Suite 300
Roseville CA 95661

- 12.17 Execution in Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts by facsimile, electronically (i.e., DocuSign), or email which for purposes of this Agreement shall be accepted as an original. All executed counterparts and each of them will be deemed to be one and the same instrument if counsel for the Parties will exchange between themselves signed counterparts. Any executed counterpart will be admissible in evidence to prove the existence and contents of this Agreement.
- 12.18 Stay of Litigation. The Parties agree that upon the execution of this Agreement and the remand of the Action to state court, the litigation shall be stayed, except to effectuate the terms of this Agreement. The Parties further agree that upon the signing of this Agreement, pursuant to California Civil Procedure Code section 583.330, to extend the date to bring a case to trial under California Civil Procedure Code section 583.310 for the entire period of this settlement process.

8/15/2024
Dated: August __, 2024

Signed by:

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 Plaintiff Corey Tapia

8/19/2024
Dated: August __, 2024

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 Defendant Meritage Homes of California, Inc.

Approved As to Content:

8/15/2024
Dated: August __, 2024

BOKHOUR LAW GROUP, P.C.

DocuSigned by:
Mehrdad Bokhour
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Mehrdad Bokhour
Attorneys for Plaintiff

8/15/2024
Dated: August __, 2024

FALAKASSA LAW, P.C.

DocuSigned by:
Joshua Falakassa
15A628B2C5A149C...

Joshua Falakassa
Attorneys for Plaintiff

Dated: August 19, 2024

PLANTE HUGUENIN LEBOVIC KAHN LLP



Jessica L. Moran
Ryan P. McGuire
Attorneys for Meritage Homes of California, Inc.