

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
COUNTY DEPARTMENT, CHANCERY DIVISION**

RICARDO GALAN, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated,	:	CASE NO.: 2021-CH-00898
	:	Consolidated with 2023-CH-07953
Plaintiff,	:	
v.	:	Hon. Eve M. Reilly
	:	
MULLINS FOOD PRODUCTS, INC.,	:	CLASS ACTION
	:	
Defendant.	:	
<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	:	

**ORDER GRANTING FINAL APPROVAL TO  
CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT AND FINAL JUDGMENT**

On July 5, 2024, the Court granted preliminary approval to the proposed class action settlement set forth in the Settlement Agreement and Release (the “Agreement” or the “Settlement Agreement”)<sup>1</sup> between Plaintiffs Ricardo Galan and Otis Winslow (“Plaintiffs”), individually and on behalf of all members of the Settlement Class, and Defendant Mullins Food Products, Inc. (“Defendant”) (collectively, the “Parties”). The Court also provisionally certified the Settlement Class for settlement purposes, approved the procedure for giving Class Notice to the members of the Settlement Class, and set a Final Approval Hearing to take place on September 30, 2024.

On September 30, 2024, the Court held a duly noticed Final Approval Hearing to consider: (1) whether the terms and conditions of the Agreement are fair, reasonable, and adequate; (2) whether a judgment should be entered dismissing the Plaintiffs’ Complaint on the merits and with prejudice in favor of Defendant and the Released Parties and against all persons or entities who are Settlement Class Members herein who have not properly or timely requested exclusion from

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise defined herein, all capitalized terms used herein shall be defined in accord with their definition in the Settlement Agreement and Release. The terms of the Settlement Agreement are fully adopted and incorporated herein.

the Settlement Class; (3) whether due and adequate notice was given to the members of the Settlement Class pursuant to the terms of the Preliminary Approval Order; and (4) whether and in what amount to award counsel for the Settlement Class as Attorneys' Fees and Expenses and whether and in what amount to award a Service Award to Plaintiffs.

The Settlement preliminarily approved by the Court creates a non-reversionary \$1,000,000.00 Settlement Fund. There are 739 Settlement Class Members and no Settlement Class Member has elected to be excluded from the Settlement. There have been no objections to the Settlement. With no claims process required, all Settlement Class Members will receive payment for an equal share of the \$1,000,000.00 Settlement Fund, after deductions for settlement administration expenses (estimated to be \$36,171.08), Court-approved attorneys' fees of no greater than 40% plus expenses, and Class Representative Service Awards of \$4,500 each. All Settlement Class Members will be sent payment for approximately \$600-700.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED THAT:**

**I. JURISDICTION OF THE COURT**

1. The Court has personal jurisdiction over all the parties to the Litigation, including all Settlement Class Members, venue is proper, and the Court has subject matter jurisdiction to approve the Agreement, including all exhibits thereto, and to enter this Final Approval Order. Without in any way affecting the finality of this Final Approval Order, this Court hereby retains jurisdiction as to all matters relating to administration, consummation, enforcement, and interpretation of the Agreement and of this Final Approval Order, and for any other necessary purpose.

2. The Court has read and considered the papers filed in support of Plaintiffs' Unopposed Motion for Final Approval (the "Motion"), including the Settlement Agreement and exhibits thereto and supporting declarations.

3. The Settlement Agreement was negotiated at arm's length by experienced counsel who were fully informed of the facts and circumstances of this litigation (the "Action") and of the strengths and weaknesses of their respective positions. The Agreement was reached after the Parties had engaged in extensive settlement discussions and after the exchange of information, including information about the size and scope of the Settlement Class and defenses asserted by Defendant in the Action. Counsel for the Parties were therefore well positioned to evaluate the benefits of the Agreement, taking into account the expense, risk, and uncertainty of protracted litigation.

4. The Court finds, for settlement purposes only, that the prerequisites for a class action under 735 ILCS § 5/2-801 have been satisfied for each Settlement Class Member in that: (a) the number of Settlement Class Members is so numerous that joinder of all members thereof is impracticable; (b) there are questions of law and fact common to the Settlement Class; (c) the claims of Plaintiffs are typical of the claims of the Settlement Class they seek to represent; (d) Plaintiffs have and will continue to fairly and adequately represent the interests of the Settlement Class for purposes of entering into the Settlement Agreement; (e) the questions of law and fact common to the Settlement Class Members predominate over any questions affecting any individual Settlement Class Member; (f) the Settlement Class is ascertainable; and (g) a class action is superior to the other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy.

## **II. CERTIFICATION OF SETTLEMENT CLASS**

5. Pursuant to 735 ILCS § 5/2-801, this Court hereby finally certifies, for settlement purposes only, the Settlement Class, as identified in the Agreement: **All individuals who work or worked for Defendant in the State of Illinois and who used a finger scan timekeeping system that captured, collected, stored, disseminated, disclosed and/or otherwise used any alleged biometric identifier or biometric information in connection with their employment (whether as an employee, temporary employee, or independent contractor) without first providing a written consent with Defendant from February 24, 2016 to present.**

Excluded from the Settlement Class are: (1) the trial judge presiding over this case; (2) Defendant, as well as any parent, subsidiary, affiliate, or control person of Defendant, and the officers, directors, agents, servants, or employees of Defendant (other than those individuals specified in the Settlement Class Data); (3) any of the Released Parties; (4) the immediate family of any of the Released Parties; (5) any Settlement Class Member who has timely opted out of this proceeding; (6) Class Counsel, their employees, and their immediate family; and (7) persons who provided their written consent to Defendant's use or disclosure of their alleged biometric information prior to using a finger scan timekeeping system at Defendant's facility in Illinois.

### **III. APPOINTMENT OF CLASS REPRESENTATIVES AND CLASS COUNSEL**

6. For settlement purposes only, the Court finally appoints Mark Hammervold of Hammervold Law, LLC, Rachel Dapeer of Dapeer Law, P.A., Manuel S. Hiraldo of Hiraldo P.A., Arun Ravindran of Hedin LLP, and Evan M. Meyers of McGuire Law, P.C. as Class Counsel for the Settlement Class, and finds they are experienced in class litigation and have adequately represented the Settlement Class.

7. For settlement purposes only, the Court finally designates Plaintiffs Ricardo Galan and Otis Winslow as the Class Representatives of the Settlement Class.

### **IV. NOTICE AND CLAIMS PROCESS**

8. The Court makes the following findings on notice to the Settlement Class:

(a) The Court finds that the distribution of the Class Notice, as provided for in the Settlement Agreement and in accordance with the Preliminary Approval Order, (i) constituted the best practicable notice under the circumstances to Settlement Class Members, (ii) constituted notice that was reasonably calculated under the circumstances to apprise Settlement Class Members of, among other things, the pendency of the Action, the nature and terms of the proposed Settlement, their right to object or to exclude themselves from the proposed Settlement, and their right to appear at the Final Approval Hearing, (iii) was reasonable and constituted due, adequate, and sufficient notice to all persons entitled to be provided with notice, and (iv) complied fully with the requirements of 735 ILCS § 5/2-801, the Rules of this Court, and any other applicable law.

(b) The Court finds that the Class Notice and methodology set forth in the Settlement Agreement, the Preliminary Approval Order, and this Final Approval Order (i) constitute the most effective and practicable notice of the Final Approval Order, the relief available to Settlement Class Members pursuant to the Final Approval Order, and applicable time periods; (ii) constitute due, adequate, and sufficient notice for all other purposes to all Settlement Class Members; and (iii) comply fully with the requirements of 735 ILCS § 5/2-801, the Rules of this Court, and any other applicable laws.

#### **V. FINAL APPROVAL OF THE CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT**

9. The Settlement Agreement is finally approved in all respects as fair, reasonable and adequate. The terms and provisions of the Settlement Agreement, including all Exhibits thereto, have been entered into in good faith and are hereby fully and finally approved as fair, reasonable, and adequate as to, and in the best interests of, each of the Parties and the Settlement Class Members. The complex legal and factual posture of the Litigation, the monetary and prospective relief provided to the Settlement Class, and the fact that the Settlement Agreement is the result of

arm's-length negotiations that included the involvement of an experienced mediator further support this finding.

## **VI. ADMINISTRATION OF THE SETTLEMENT**

10. The Parties are hereby directed to implement the Settlement Agreement according to its terms and provisions. The Administrator is directed to provide Settlement Payments to Valid Settlement Class Members.

11. The Court hereby approves Class Counsel's request for attorney fees, costs, and expenses, and awards Class Counsel \$423,083.78 as reasonable attorneys' fees and costs. The Court finds that the requested fees are reasonable under the percentage of the fund for the reasons set forth herein. The award of Attorneys' Fees and Expenses to Class Counsel shall be paid and deducted from the Settlement Fund within the time period and manner set forth in the Settlement Agreement.

12. The Court has concluded that: (a) Class Counsel achieved a favorable result for the Class by obtaining Defendant's agreement to make significant funds available to Settlement Class Members; (b) Class Counsel devoted substantial effort to pre- and post-filing investigation, legal analysis, and litigation; (c) Class Counsel prosecuted the Settlement Class's claims on a contingent fee basis, investing significant time and accumulating costs with no guarantee that they would receive compensation for their services or recover their expenses; (d) Class Counsel employed their knowledge of and experience with class action litigation in achieving a valuable settlement for the Settlement Class, in spite of Defendant's possible legal defenses and its experienced and capable counsel; (e) Class Counsel has a standard contingent fee agreement with Plaintiffs, who have reviewed the Settlement Agreement and been informed of Class Counsel's fee request and have approved; and (f) the Notice informed Settlement Class Members of the amount and nature of Class Counsel's fee and cost request under the Settlement Agreement, Class Counsel filed and

posted their fee petition in time for Settlement Class Members to make a meaningful decision whether to object to the Class Counsel's fee request, and no Settlement Class Member(s) objected.

13. The Court awards a Service Award in the amount of \$4,500.00 to each of the two Plaintiffs (for a total of \$9,000.00), which shall be paid and deducted from the Settlement Fund within the time period and manner set forth in the Settlement Agreement.

14. The Administrator shall be paid pursuant to the Parties' agreement which shall be paid and deducted from the Settlement Fund within the time period and manner set forth in the Settlement Agreement.

15. The Parties have agreed that any remaining funds from the Settlement Fund, including any uncashed checks, shall be deposited by the Settlement Administrator with the Illinois State Unclaimed Property Fund.

## **VII. RELEASE OF CLAIMS**

16. Upon entry of this Final Approval Order, all members of the Class who did not validly and timely submit Requests for Exclusion in the manner provided in the Agreement shall, by operation of this Final Approval Order, have fully, finally and forever released, relinquished and discharged Defendant and the Released Parties from the Released Claims as set forth in the Agreement.

17. Furthermore, in accord with the Agreement, all Settlement Class Members who did not validly and timely submit Requests for Exclusion in the manner provided in the Agreement have fully, finally and forever released, relinquished and discharged Defendant and the Released Parties from the Released Claims and are hereby permanently barred and enjoined from filing, commencing, prosecuting, maintaining, intervening in, participating in, conducting or continuing, either directly or in any other capacity, either individually or as a class, any action or proceeding in any court, agency, arbitration, tribunal or jurisdiction, asserting any claims released pursuant to

the Agreement, or seeking an award of fees and costs of any kind or nature whatsoever and pursuant to any authority or theory whatsoever, relating to or arising from the Action or that could have been brought in the Action and/or as a result of or in addition to those provided by the Agreement.

18. The terms of the Settlement Agreement and of this Final Approval Order, including all Exhibits thereto, shall be forever binding on, and shall have *res judicata* and preclusive effect in, all pending and future lawsuits maintained by Plaintiff and all other Settlement Class Members, as well as their heirs, executors and administrators, successors, and assigns.

19. The Releases, which are set forth in the Settlement Agreement and which are also set forth below, are expressly incorporated herein in all respects and are effective as of the date of this Final Approval Order; and the Released Parties (as that term is defined in the Settlement Agreement) are forever released, relinquished, and discharged by the Releasing Persons (as that term is defined below and in the Settlement Agreement) from all Released Claims (as that term is defined below and in the Settlement Agreement).

(a) The Settlement Agreement and Releases do not affect the rights of Settlement Class Members who timely and properly submit a Request for Exclusion from the Settlement in accordance with the requirements of the Settlement Agreement.

(b) The administration and consummation of the Settlement as embodied in the Settlement Agreement shall be under the authority of the Court. The Court shall retain jurisdiction to protect, preserve, and implement the Settlement Agreement, including, but not limited to, enforcement of the Releases. The Court expressly retains jurisdiction in order to enter such further orders as may be necessary or appropriate in administering and implementing the terms and provisions of the Settlement Agreement.



(c) The Settlement Agreement shall be the exclusive remedy for any and all Settlement Class Members, except those who have properly and timely requested exclusion (opted out), and the Released Parties shall not be subject to liability or expense for any of the Released Claims to any Settlement Class Member(s).

(d) The Releases shall not preclude any action to enforce the terms of the Settlement Agreement, including participation in any of the processes detailed therein. The Releases set forth herein and in the Settlement Agreement are not intended to include the release of any rights or duties of the Settling Parties arising out of the Settlement Agreement, including the express warranties and covenants contained therein.

20. Plaintiff and all Settlement Class Members who did not properly or timely exclude themselves from the Settlement Class are, from this day forward, hereby permanently barred and enjoined from directly or indirectly: (i) asserting any Released Claims in any action or proceeding; (ii) filing, commencing, prosecuting, intervening in, or participating in (as class members or otherwise), any lawsuit based on or relating to any the Released Claims or the facts and circumstances relating thereto; or (iii) organizing any Settlement Class Members into a separate class for purposes of pursuing as a purported class action any lawsuit (including by seeking to amend a pending complaint to include class allegations, or seeking class certification in a pending action) based on or relating to any of the Released Claims.

#### **VIII. NO ADMISSION OF LIABILITY**

21. Defendant expressly denies and disclaims any liability or wrongdoing relating to the Action. Neither the Settlement Agreement, nor any of its terms and provisions, nor any of the negotiations or proceedings connected with it, nor any of the documents or statements referred to therein, nor this Final Approval Order, nor any of its terms and provisions, shall be:

(a) offered by any person or received against Defendant or any Released Party as evidence of, or construed as or deemed to be evidence of, any presumption, concession, or

admission by Defendant of the truth of the facts alleged by any person, the validity of any claim that has been or could have been asserted in the Action or in any other litigation or judicial or administrative proceeding, the deficiency of any defense that has been or could have been asserted in the Action or in any litigation, or of any liability, negligence, fault, or wrongdoing by Defendant or any Released Party;

(b) offered by any person or received against Defendant or any Released Party as evidence of a presumption, concession, or admission of any fault or violation of any law by Defendant or any Released Party; or

(c) offered by any person or received against Defendant or any Released Party as evidence of a presumption, concession, or admission with respect to any liability, negligence, fault, or wrongdoing in any civil, criminal, or administrative action or proceeding.

#### **IX. OTHER PROVISIONS**

22. This Final Approval Order and the Settlement Agreement (including the Exhibits thereto) may be filed in any action against or by any Released Party (as that term is defined herein and the Settlement Agreement) to support a defense of *res judicata*, collateral estoppel, release, good faith settlement, judgment bar or reduction, or any theory of claim preclusion or issue preclusion or similar defense or counterclaim.

23. Without further order of the Court, the Settling Parties may agree to reasonably necessary extensions of time to carry out any of the provisions of the Settlement Agreement.

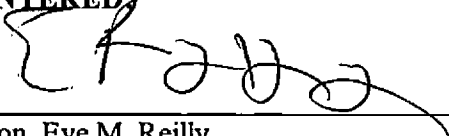
24. In the event that the Effective Date does not occur, this Final Approval Order shall automatically be rendered null and void and shall be vacated and, in such event, all orders entered and releases delivered in connection herewith shall be null and void. In the event that the Effective Date does not occur, the Settlement Agreement shall become null and void and be of no further force and effect, neither the Settlement Agreement nor the Court's Orders, including this Order,

shall be used or referred to for any purpose whatsoever, and the Parties shall retain, without prejudice, any and all objections, arguments, and defenses with respect to class certification, including the right to argue that no class should be certified for any purpose, and with respect to any claims or allegations in this Action.

25. This Action, including all individual claims and class claims presented herein, is hereby dismissed on the merits and with prejudice against Plaintiffs and all other Settlement Class Members, without fees or costs to any party except as otherwise provided herein.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

ENTERED:



Hon. Eve M. Reilly  
Circuit Court Judge  
Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois

**Judge Eve M. Reilly**

**OCT 02 2024**

**Circuit Court-2122**