

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Labor Commissioner Cites Ten Northern California Buffet Restaurants \$16 Million for Wage Theft Violations

San Francisco—California Labor Commissioner Julie A. Su has issued wage theft citations totaling approximately \$16 million against ten Northern California buffet restaurants. The citations include civil penalties as well as wages, premium and liquidated damages owed to more than 600 workers for multiple wage theft violations.

The in-depth investigations, prompted by complaints lodged against buffets located in the Bay Area and Sacramento regions, revealed that servers were paid an average \$1.15 per hour for 72 hours of work each week. Some servers were either not paid at all, or were just paid \$200 per month. Kitchen workers were paid very low fixed salaries, without receiving additional compensation for any overtime.

“It is the Labor Commissioner’s responsibility to ensure all workers in our state are paid fairly under the law,” said Christine Baker, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR). “The state will continue to cite employers who fail to comply with labor laws.” The Labor Commissioner’s Office, also known as the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE), is a division within DIR.

“We want to create a culture in California where employers benefit from playing by the rules, and those who don’t feel just how costly that can be,” said Labor Commissioner Julie A. Su.

Investigators found that the buffet employers produced falsified timecards and payroll records. Some of the servers who wanted to report taxes were required to purchase their paychecks from the employer in cash for the full amount, and some servers were required to pay employers \$8 in cash each day in order to work at the restaurants. The investigations further revealed that workers were not given meal or rest breaks as required by the law, and were paid in cash without the required itemized wage statements.

“The fact that these same violations were found in multiple restaurants across the state shows how rampant wage theft is,” continued Commissioner Su. “We are using every tool in our arsenal to fight it and to get workers their hard-earned wages.”

Citations were issued and served to the following businesses:

- Yu Chen, owner of Golden Dragon Buffet in Brentwood, for \$3.79 million

- GDB Investment Inc., owners of Golden Dragon Buffet in Roseville, for \$3.66 million
- NCBI Investment Inc. & HC Global Inc., owners of New Dragon Buffet in San Leandro, for \$3.14 million
- Zhao & Wong Inc., owners of Oriental Buffet in Arcata, for \$709,285
- KKT Investment Inc., owners of Kokyo Sushi Buffet in Hayward, for \$530,647
- Li Ming Zhao & Quin Wen Wang, owners of Oriental Buffet in Fortuna, for \$364,203

The Labor Commissioner worked in conjunction with the Employment Development Department (EDD), the Department of Insurance, the Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office and local police departments on most of these investigations.

Within the last two years, the Labor Commissioner also issued citations to the following businesses for similar violations:

- Sunnyvale Buffet Inc., owners of Crazy Buffet in Sunnyvale for \$1.6 million
- Oakland Century Buffet Inc., owners of Century Buffet in Oakland for \$1.38 million
- China Buffet of Eureka Inc., owners of China Buffet in Eureka for \$95,154
- Bingqing Buffet Inc., owners of Beijing Buffet in South San Francisco for \$529,349

The Labor Commissioner's Office previously cited the owners of Crazy Buffet and Oriental Buffet for minimum wage and cash pay violations in 2007 and 2010.

The Labor Commissioner's Office inspects workplaces for wage and hour violations, adjudicates wage claims, enforces prevailing wage rates and apprenticeship standards in public works projects, investigates retaliation and whistleblower complaints, issues licenses and registrations for businesses, and educates the public on labor laws.

The most recent information related to California labor laws is available on DIR's [website](#). Employees with work-related questions or complaints may call the toll-free California Workers' Information Line at (866) 924-9757 for recorded information in Spanish and English.

Members of the press may contact Erika Monterroza at (510) 286-1164 or Peter Melton at (510) 286-7046 for additional details.

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