

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Labor Commissioner Decision Results in over \$100,000 for Hunting Club Caretaker Making Less than Minimum Wage

Colusa—The California Labor Commissioner’s Office announced that a Northern California hunting club paid an on-site caretaker \$100,867 in back wages after the wage claim hearing officer ruled the worker was making less than minimum wage. He was misclassified as an exempt, salaried employee and should have been paid hourly.

The caretaker of Butte Lodge Outing Club, Inc. in Colusa filed a claim for unpaid wages from April 2014 to June 2016. Following the hearing, the Labor Commissioner’s Office awarded the worker \$76,003 in overtime wages, \$17,988 in liquidated damages, and \$6,875 in interest.

“Misclassifying workers exposes employers to significant financial costs,” said Labor Commissioner Julie A. Su. “California law is clear that if employers pay less than the minimum wage, when they are caught they will be responsible for paying not just the wages owed but an equivalent amount in liquidated damages plus interest. This case shows that when workers come forward to report wage theft, we can help them get what they’ve earned and in many cases even more.”

The 55-year-old caretaker had been employed at the hunting club for 18 years as a salaried employee paid biweekly. In addition to the care of the property, the worker was tasked with planting the wetlands with trees, grasses and grain preferred by waterfowl, and upon request, frequently plucked, gutted and cleaned the ducks shot down by the lodge members. He worked more than 70 hours a week during duck hunting season, which normally takes place for 10 to 12 weeks from October through January. His employer paid him the wages owed this month.

Most workers in California, unless [exempt from overtime laws](#), must receive overtime pay of 1.5 times the regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 8 hours in a workday or over 40 hours in a week, and double the regular rate of pay for all hours worked over 12 hours in a workday. Workers paid less than minimum wage are also entitled to [liquidated damages](#), which equal the amount of underpaid wages plus interest.

The [Labor Commissioner's Office](#), officially known as the Department of Industrial Relations' Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, inspects workplaces for wage and hour violations, adjudicates wage claims, investigates retaliation complaints, issues licenses and registrations for businesses, enforces prevailing wage rates and apprenticeship standards in public works projects, and educates the public on labor laws.

Its [Wage Theft is a Crime](#) multilingual public awareness campaign was launched in 2014 to help inform workers of their rights and employers of their responsibilities. Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734).

Members of the press may contact Erika Monterroza or Peter Melton at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). For general inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.