



U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Press Release

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Pacific Culinary and CB Foods to Pay \$245,000 in EEOC Sexual Harassment and Retaliation Lawsuit

Federal Agency Charges Asian Food Companies Failed to Prevent Sexual Harassment of Employees

LOS ANGELES – California-based Asian food companies Pacific Culinary Group, Inc. and CB Foods, Inc. will pay \$245,000 and furnish injunctive relief to settle a U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) sexual harassment, retaliation, and constructive discharge lawsuit, the federal agency announced today. The EEOC brought the lawsuit against two Asian food companies on behalf of a class of female and male food production workers, some of whom have limited English proficiency.

According to the lawsuit, Pacific Culinary and CB Foods subjected workers at its Monterey Park location to ongoing verbal and physical harassment. The lawsuit alleged that the companies' chief operating officer sexually harassed male and female employees. The harassment included, but was not limited to, frequent and offensive groping and touching; unwelcome sexual advances and comments about their appearances; and inappropriate questions about employees' sexual preferences and sexual activities.

Despite having received multiple complaints of sexual harassment, the companies failed to take prompt and effective action, thereby allowing the harassment to continue unabated, the EEOC charged.

The EEOC further asserted that the companies retaliated against employees who reported sexual harassment by further harassment, discipline and in certain instances, termination. The failure to address and remedy the harassment resulted in intolerable working conditions, which compelled some of the workers to quit, rather than endure the ongoing harassment.

Such alleged conduct violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, and retaliation for complaining about discrimination. The EEOC filed suit (EEOC v. Pacific Culinary Group, Inc. et al., Case No. 2:23-cv-03018 FLA [MARx]) in U.S. District Court for the Central District of California after first attempting to reach a pre-litigation settlement through its voluntary conciliation process.

In addition to the monetary relief, the consent decree settling the suit requires the companies and their successor, JRC Culinary Group, to institute injunctive relief, which includes reviewing and revising policies and procedures to bring them into compliance with Title VII; ensuring all employees are trained on discrimination, harassment, and retaliation; and conducting audits to ensure that employees, including supervisors and managers, are held accountable with respect to discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

The companies and JRC Culinary Group will also institute a complaint procedure, including a toll-free complaint hotline and an online complaint process, and maintain records regarding complaints and their investigations and outcomes. The decree, signed by U.S. District Judge Fernando L. Aenlle-Rocha on May 29, 2024, will remain under the court's jurisdiction for the duration of the three-and-a-half-years.

“The EEOC brought this case to defend the rights of vulnerable workers to be free of sexual harassment, particularly where language barriers have been used to deter complaints,” said Anna Park, regional attorney for the EEOC’s Los Angeles District Office. “Employers must ensure that complaint mechanisms are accessible to all workers and take appropriate steps to address harassment towards vulnerable workers.”

Patricia Kane, the EEOC’s acting Los Angeles district director, said, “This settlement

sends a strong message that the EEOC will vigorously enforce federal laws against sexual harassment and retaliation.”

For more information on sexual harassment discrimination, visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment>). For more information on retaliation, please visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation> (<https://www.eeoc.gov/retaliation>).

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at www.eeoc.gov (<http://www.eeoc.gov>). Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our [email updates](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new) (<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new>).

Recent Press Releases from the Los Angeles District Office

[Sprouts Farmers Market Resolves EEOC Discrimination Charge](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/sprouts-farmers-market-resolves-eeoc-discrimination-charge) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/sprouts-farmers-market-resolves-eeoc-discrimination-charge>)

[BaronHR to Pay \\$2.2 Million in EEOC Hiring Discrimination Lawsuit](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/baronhr-pay-22-million-eeoc-hiring-discrimination-lawsuit) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/baronhr-pay-22-million-eeoc-hiring-discrimination-lawsuit>)

[EEOC Sues Meathead Movers for Age Discrimination](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-meathead-movers-age-discrimination) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/eeoc-sues-meathead-movers-age-discrimination>)

Recent Press Releases on the Subject of Sexual Harassment, Retaliation

[The Cleaning Authority-Fox Valley to Pay \\$200,000 to Settle EEOC Sexual Harassment and Retaliation Lawsuit](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/cleaning-authority-fox-valley-pay-200000-settle-eeoc-sexual-harassment-and-retaliation) (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/cleaning-authority-fox-valley-pay-200000-settle-eeoc-sexual-harassment-and-retaliation>)

La Autoridad de Limpieza-Fox Valley pagará \$200,000 Para Resolver la Demanda de Represalias y Acoso Sexual de la EEOC (<https://www.eeoc.gov/es/newsroom/la-autoridad-de-limpieza-fox-valley-pagara-200000-para-resolver-la-demanda-de-represalias>)

NorVal Electric to Pay \$50,000 in EEOC Sexual Harassment and Retaliation Lawsuit (<https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/norval-electric-pay-50000-eeoc-sexual-harassment-and-retaliation-lawsuit>)