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ROB BONTA

NICKLAS A. AKERS

Attorney General of California

FILED

Superior Court of California County of Alameda 12/08/2021

Chad Finks, Executive Officer/Clerk of the Court

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

[PROPOSED] FINAL JUDGMENT AND

Plaintiff, the People of the State of California (Plaintiff or People), appearing through its attorney, Rob Bonta, Attorney General of the State of California, by Supervising Deputy Attorney General Michael E. Elisofon and Deputy Attorney General Joseph A. Ragazzo, and Wedgewood. LLC (Defendant), appearing through its attorneys Anthony Pacheco and M. Anthony Brown (collectively, the Parties), having stipulated and consented to the entry of this Final Judgment and Permanent Injunction (Judgment) without the taking of proof and without trial or adjudication of any fact or law, without this Judgment, the payment of civil penalties or restitution pursuant to this Judgment, or the People's allocation of restitution made pursuant to this Judgment

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1	constituting evidence of or an admission by Defendant regarding any issue of law or fact alleged
2	in the Complaint on file, with Defendant denying all allegations in the Complaint and without
3	Defendant admitting any liability whatsoever, and with all Parties having waived their right to
4	appeal, and the Court having considered the matter and good cause appearing:
5	IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED THAT:
-6	PARTIES AND JURISDICTION
7	1. This Court has jurisdiction over the allegations and subject matter of the People's
8	complaint filed in this action, and the Parties to this action; venue is proper in this County, and
9	this Court has jurisdiction to enter this Judgment.
10	2. In the event that any statute or regulation pertaining to the subject matter of this
11	Judgment is modified, enacted, promulgated, or interpreted by the California legislature or courts
12	such that the statute or regulation is in conflict with any provision of this Judgment, and such that
13	Defendant cannot comply with both the statute or regulation and the provision of this Judgment,
14	Defendant may comply with such statute or regulation, and such action shall constitute
15	compliance with the counterpart provision of this Judgment. Defendant shall provide advance
16	written notice to the Attorney General of the inconsistent provision of the statute or regulation
17	with which Defendant intends to comply under this Paragraph, and of the counterpart provision of
18	this Judgment that is in conflict with the statute or regulation.
19	<u>DEFINITIONS</u>
20	3. For the purposes of this Judgment:
21	a. "AND" and "OR" have both conjunctive and disjunctive meanings.
22	b. "AFFILIATED" means a person OR entity that directly, OR indirectly
23	through one OR more intermediaries, controls OR is controlled by, OR is under common control
24	with, the person OR entity specified.
25	c. "BONA FIDE FIXED-TERM TENANT" means a TENANT in possession
26	of a RESIDENTIAL HOUSING UNIT under a legally valid, not void FIXED-TERM LEASE
27	that qualifies either (i) for the right to possession until the end of the lease term under California

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1	Code of Civil Procedure section 1161b (b) or (ii) as "bona fide" under the Protecting Tenants at
2	Foreclosure Act of 2009 ("PTFA"), Pub. L. 111-22, § 702(b), 123 Stat. 1661 (May 20, 2009).
3	d. "CASH FOR KEYS" means offering consideration, monetary OR
4	otherwise, to an OCCUPANT in exchange for the OCCUPANT's agreement to vacate a
5	RENTAL HOUSING UNIT. CASH FOR KEYS does not include agreements to settle unlawful
6	detainer actions.
7	e. "CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP NOTICE" means the document that
8	Defendant provides, as required by Civil Code section 1962, to TENANTS to notify them that
9	Defendant has taken ownership of a RENTAL HOUSING UNIT.
10	f. "EVIDENCE OF TENANCY" may include any of the following items,
11	though no one item, merely by having been listed here, is deemed presumptive evidence that a
12	legally valid tenancy exists:
13	(1) A written lease agreement (original or copy);
14	(2) A written and current Section 8 agreement;
15	(3) Evidence of a history of rent payments to the PRIOR OWNER of a
16	RENTAL HOUSING UNIT, the owner's legal agent, or to a TENANT of the PRIOR OWNER,
17	such as receipts, money orders, or cancelled checks establishing any rental payment made before
18	the foreclosure sale;
19	(4) The name(s) and contact information for the PRIOR OWNER;
20	(5) Any of the following items showing the occupant's name and
21	address at the property purchased in foreclosure:
22	A. Any utility service contract, statement or payment receipts
23	from agencies providing gas, electricity, water, cable, phone, or garbage service dated or
24	postmarked before the foreclosure sale;
25	B. Any current automobile registration and auto insurance
26	policy (declarations page) dated before the foreclosure sale;
27	C. Any correspondence from a government agency or financial
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1	institution dated or postmarked before the foreclosure sale;
2	D. Any pay stubs or employment documents dated or
3	postmarked before the foreclosure sale;
4	E. Any current voter registration card or any other document
5	establishing current voter registration dated or postmarked at least 45 days before the foreclosure
6	sale;
7	F. Any insurance documents, including medical, dental, vision,
8	life, home, and rental, that are dated or postmarked before the foreclosure sale.
9	g. "FIXED-TERM LEASE" means a legally valid agreement, entered into
10	before the foreclosure sale of a RENTAL HOUSING UNIT, under which a TENANT takes
11	possession of a RENTAL HOUSING UNIT for a definite period of time.
12	h. "JUST CAUSE ORDINANCE" means a local ordinance that prescribes
13	the permissible grounds for evicting a TENANT from a RENTAL HOUSING UNIT.
14	i. "NOTICE TO QUIT" means a written notice demanding that a known
15	TENANT or PRIOR OWNER surrender and vacate real property sold in foreclosure.
ίσ	j. "OCCUPANT" means a person residing in a RENTAL HOUSING UNIT.
17	An OCCUPANT may or may not be a TENANT.
18	k. "PERIODIC TENANT" means a tenant or subtenant in possession of a
19	RENTAL HOUSING UNIT under a legally valid month-to-month lease or periodic tenancy at the
20	time the property is sold in foreclosure that either (i) satisfies the conditions of California Code of
21	Civil Procedure section 1161b(a) or (ii) qualifies as "bona fide" under the PTFA, § 702(b).
22	1. "PRIOR OWNER" refers to the mortgager, or to the child, spouse, or
23	parent of the mortgager, of residential real property purchased by Defendant in a foreclosure sale.
24	m. "RENTAL HOUSING UNIT" has the same definition as used in Code of
25	Civil Procedure section 1161a, subdivision (d).
26	n. "TENANT" means a person in possession of a RENTAL HOUSING UNIT
27	as either a PERIODIC TENANT or a BONA FIDE FIXED-TERM TENANT.
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- d. Failing to comply with the statutorily mandated requirements of Civil Code section 1962 [notice of change of ownership];
- e. Failing to comply with the statutorily mandated requirements of the Tenant Protection Act of 2019 (Civ. Code §§ 1946.2, 1947.12, 1947.13); and
- f. Failing to comply with the statutorily mandated requirements of the Ellis Act (Govt. Code §§ 7060-7060.7) and all statutes, ordinances, and regulations of public entities adopted pursuant to the Ellis Act.
- In accordance with California Business and Professions Code section 17203,
 Defendant shall also comply with the injunctive provisions contained in Paragraphs 6 through 26 of this Judgment.

Obligations Upon the Purchase of Residential Real Property in Foreclosure

- 6. No later than seven (7) business days after recording the trustee's deed upon sale for any residential real property purchased by Defendant in a foreclosure sale, a representative of Defendant shall make an initial visit to that property (if it is safe to do so) in an attempt to make contact with any OCCUPANTS and gather EVIDENCE OF TENANCY. If the initial visit does not result in contact with any OCCUPANTS, Defendant shall make a second visit, on a later date and at a different time of day from the first, in an additional attempt to make contact with any OCCUPANTS and gather EVIDENCE OF TENANCY. If the second visit also does not result in contact with any OCCUPANTS, Defendant shall clearly and conspicuously post a written message that explains the purpose of the visits and provides Defendant's contact information including a mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address.
- 7. No later than fourteen (14) business days after recording the trustee's deed upon sale, Defendant shall, based on the EVIDENCE OF TENANCY that Defendant was able to obtain when acting in compliance with Paragraph 6, make a good faith determination as to:
- a. The identity of all adult OCCUPANTS claiming legal possession of any RENTAL HOUSING UNIT at the property;

1		b.	Whether such OCCUPANTS are proficient in the English language and, if
2	not, the prima	ary lan	guage spoken by them;
3		c.	Whether any such OCCUPANTS are protected under the SCRA OR
4	CMVC;		
5		d.	Whether any such OCCUPANTS are TENANTS entitled to a 90-day
6	NOTICE TO	QUIT	;
7		e.	Whether any OCCUPANTS are BONA FIDE FIXED-TERM TENANTS;
-8		f.	Whether any RENTAL HOUSING UNIT at the property falls within the
9	jurisdiction o	f a JUS	ST CAUSE ORDINANCE; and,
10		g.	Whether the PRIOR OWNER was responsible for providing any UTILITY
11	SERVICE to	the RE	ENTAL HOUSING UNIT.
12	8.	Defe	ndant shall document, in writing, every determination that it makes on every
13	residential re	al prop	erty purchased by Defendant in a foreclosure sale as required under Paragrap
14	7. For each s	uch de	termination, Defendant shall record and retain:
15		a.	The name of each OCCUPANT identified;
16		b.	Each item of EVIDENCE OF TENANCY obtained and considered;
17		c.	The determination made as to whether any OCCUPANT is a PERIODIC
18	TENANT or	BONA	FIDE FIXED-TERM TENANT;
19		d.	The determination made as to whether any RENTAL HOUSING UNIT at
20	the property f	alls wi	thin the jurisdiction of a JUST CAUSE ORDINANCE; and
21	19	e.	The reasons for these determinations.
22	9.	Defe	ndant shall provide written notice to all known OCCUPANTS of its
23	determination	ıs unde	er Paragraph 8(c) and (d). Defendants' notice shall clearly and conspicuously
24	provide the re	cipien	ts with three (3) days to respond.
25	10.	Defe	ndant shall also provide a separate notice addressed to all OCCUPANTS
26	residing on th	e prop	erty. The notice shall identify all known OCCUPANTS by name and include
27	at least the fo	llowing	g information:
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1	a UTILITY SERVICE to the RENTAL HOUSING UNIT in which such OCCUPANT resides,
2	Defendant shall request the transfer of the UTILITY SERVICE account into Defendant's own
3	name or the name of an AFFILIATED entity. Defendant's actions in compliance with this
4	Paragraph shall not be evidence that a valid tenancy exists.
5	Cash for Keys Negotiations
6	15. Defendant shall document all CASH FOR KEYS negotiations in writing, either
7	simultaneously OR as soon as practicable after the negotiations. For each CASH FOR KEYS
8	negotiation, Defendant shall record, in writing, the:
9	a. Full name of each person involved;
10	b. Contact information provided by each OCCUPANT or otherwise obtained
11	by Defendant;
12	c. Material terms discussed;
13	d. Date AND time the conversation took place;
14	e. Address of the property involved, including unit number OR description
15	(e.g., "converted garage"); and
16	f. Whether an agreement was reached.
17	16. Defendant shall retain documentation of all of the information listed in Paragraph
18	15 and make it available upon request pursuant to Paragraph 30 below.
19	17. Where CASH FOR KEYS agreements are regulated by state or local law,
20	Defendant shall fully comply with the relevant requirements of the state law or local ordinance.
21	Unless permitted by law, Defendant shall not, in any negotiation subject to such a state or local
22	law, offer less than the mandated minimum compensation under such law.
23	18. Defendant shall retain a copy of all fully executed CASH FOR KEYS agreements
24	and make them available upon request pursuant to Paragraph 30, below.
25	Terminating Tenancy
26	19. As specified in Civil Code section 1962(c), Defendant shall not serve or cause to
27	be served a notice pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 1161(2) or otherwise evict a
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- e. that the OCCUPANT may have additional rights or protections under local or state law, including just cause for eviction, and may not have to vacate; and
- f. that the OCCUPANT may obtain further information or legal representation from a legal services program, county bar association, local court or the California Courts Online Self-Help Center, and include applicable contact information.
- Whenever Defendant enters into a settlement agreement or stipulated judgment with any TENANT or OCCUPANT (who is not a PRIOR OWNER) of a residential property purchased in foreclosure, Defendant shall notify the TENANT or OCCUPANT, and include language in any settlement agreement or stipulated judgment entered into by the parties, that Defendant will stipulate to entry of an order barring access to the court record pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure § 1161.2, provided that the TENANT or OCCUPANT has complied with all material terms of the agreement. Upon request, Defendant shall provide the TENANT or OCCUPANT with an appropriate motion or petition for requesting an order barring access to the court record. Defendant shall retain copies of any such settlements and stipulated judgments and make them available upon request pursuant to Paragraph 30, below.

Employee Training and Compliance

- 27. On an annual basis, and no later than 90 days after signing this Judgment,
 Defendant shall train all California employees with responsibility for any matter covered by this
 Judgment, except attorneys, on the rights of holdover TENANTS in residential properties
 purchased in foreclosure. Such training shall at a minimum include the following topics:
- a. A TENANT'S rights under California law to habitable premises, access to utilities, quiet enjoyment, AND, post-foreclosure, the right to either stay for an additional 90 days OR finish the remaining term of a pre-existing FIXED-TERM LEASE.
 - b. The rights of TENANTS with federal Section 8 housing subsidies;
 - c. The nature of a TENANT'S rights under a JUST CAUSE ORDINANCE;
- d. The UNLAWFUL DETAINER process AND the right of TENANTS to exclusive AND peaceful possession until judgment;

1	e. The right of TENANTS under applicable state and federal law to
2	reasonable accommodation during tenancy, including during the eviction process;
3	f. The rights of TENANTS under the SCRA AND CMVC; and
4	g. The rights of TENANTS in ELLIS ACT evictions.
5	MONITORING AND REPORTING
6	28. Defendant shall prepare AND provide reports to the Attorney General
7	documenting its compliance with the injunctive provisions of this Judgment. The first
8	compliance report shall be provided one hundred eighty (180) calendar days after entry of this
9	Judgment. Four additional reports shall be provided thereafter at one-year intervals following
10	production of the initial report, unless Plaintiff AND Defendant agree in writing to a different
11	schedule.
12	29. Defendant's compliance reports shall set forth the following information:
13	a. The name, address, AND telephone number of any new foreclosure
14	purchasing entities AFFILIATED with Defendant in California as well as a brief description of
15	how the new entity is AFFILIATED;
16	b. The number of occupied residential real properties acquired by Defendant
17	in California through foreclosure sales, AND for each such property:
18	i. The number of RENTAL HOUSING UNITS on the premises;
19	ii. The number of OCCUPANTS that Defendant identified as
20	TENANTS in accordance with Paragraph 7 above;
21	c. All UNLAWFUL DETAINER proceedings initiated by Defendant against
22	OCCUPANTS of residential real properties purchased after foreclosure, AND for each such
23	proceeding: the case caption, court, address of the property, disposition, AND copies of any
24	judgments or settlement agreements, if any;
25	d. The number of CASH FOR KEYS agreements negotiated.
26	e. The number of CASH FOR KEYS agreements reached.
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1	f. For each CASH FOR KEYS deal either negotiated or concluded,
2	Defendant shall provide:
3	i. Full name of each person involved;
4	ii. Any contact information provided for each person involved or
5	otherwise obtained by Defendant;
6	iii. Terms discussed;
7	iv. Date AND time the conversation took place;
8	v. Address of the property involved, including unit number OR
9	description (e.g., "converted garage"); and,
lo	vi. Whether an agreement was reached.
11	g. Any legal proceedings filed against Defendant relating to CASH FOR
12	KEYS negotiations with, or eviction proceedings against, OCCUPANTS of a RENTAL
13	HOUSING UNIT purchased by Defendant in foreclosure.
14	30. Defendants shall retain records documenting its compliance reports for as long as
15	the injunctive provisions of this Judgment remain in effect. Upon request, Defendant shall
16	provide the California Attorney General with such records. Such requests shall be made in
17	writing, AND Defendant shall have thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of such a request to
18	respond, unless the Parties agree in writing to a longer response time.
19	31. The Attorney General and Defendant agree that the compliance reports and other
20	information provided by Defendant as required by the injunctive provisions of this Judgment is
21	solely for the Attorney General to monitor Defendant's compliance with this Judgment. Such
22	information shall not be disclosed to any person or entity except in response to lawful process
23	(e.g., a subpoena). If the Attorney General receives a request for such information pursuant to
24	lawful process, the Attorney General shall promptly notify Defendant so that Defendant may
25	consider the appropriate legal response. Nothing in this Judgment shall preclude Plaintiff from
26.	making and obtaining a response to investigative demands from Defendant as otherwise provided
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1	by law under Government Code section 11180 et seq., Business and Professions Code section
2	17508, OR other legal authorization.
3	MONETARY PROVISIONS
4	32. Defendants shall pay, in the aggregate, \$3,500,000 as further described in
5	Paragraphs 33-35 of this Judgment. Payment shall be made within thirty (30) calendar days of
6	the date of entry of this Judgment, payable by wire transfer to the California Attorney General's
7	Office pursuant to instructions provided by the California Attorney General's Office.
8	33. Pursuant to Business and Professions Code sections 17206, Defendant shall pay
9	\$250,000 in civil penalties.
10	34. Pursuant to Business and Professions Code sections 17203, Defendant shall pay
11	\$2,750,000 in restitution. This amount shall be paid to the California Attorney General's office,
12	which may engage a third-party administrator to distribute the funds to former TENANTS of
13	Defendant's RENTAL HOUSING UNITS, at the sole discretion of the California Attorney
14	General's Office, based on the value of their lost leasehold interest AND other factors to be
15	considered by the California Attorney General's Office. The California Attorney General's
16	Office may use restitution funds under this Paragraph to pay for costs of administration, including
17	the costs of a third-party administrator.
18	a. Within sixty (60) calendar days of the date of entry of this Judgment,
19	Defendant shall provide the Attorney General with the names and last known addresses of
20	individuals who may be entitled to restitution under this Paragraph to the extent that Defendant
21	possesses such information.
22	b. In exchange for Defendant's payment of these restitution funds, Plaintiff
23	shall secure, from each consumer who accepts restitution, an agreement that Wedgewood would
24	be entitled to offset that restitution award against any future claim by that consumer against
25	Defendant related to the same foreclosed property.
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1	41. After a period of five (5) years from the date of entry of this Judgment, Defendant
2	may serve upon the Attorney General a request to terminate the injunctive terms of the Judgment.
3	Defendant and the Attorney General shall then discuss in good faith whether Defendant has
4	substantially complied with the injunctive relief stated. Defendant may file with the court, ninety
5	(90) calendar days after serving the request, and serve on the Attorney General, a motion to
6	terminate the injunctive terms of the Judgment. The Attorney General will not oppose
7	Defendant's motion, and the Court shall grant it, if Defendant demonstrates that it has been in
8	substantial compliance with the injunctive terms for the three (3) years prior to Defendant's
9	motion. If the Court denies Defendant's motion in whole or part, Defendant may invoke the
10	procedure set forth in this Paragraph after one (1) year from the denial of Defendant's most recen
1	motion to terminate or at such earlier time as the Court may allow.
12	42. The clerk is ordered to enter this Judgment forthwith.
13	IT IS SO ORDERED, this grant day of secretary, 2021.
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6	Judge of the Superior Court
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