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November 14, 2017  
For Immediate Release

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**DFEH SETTLES CLAIMS AGAINST NAPA VALLEY GROCERY COMPANY FOR ILLEGAL ENGLISH ONLY POLICY AND AGE DISCRIMINATION**

*\$149,000 Obtained for Five Women in addition to Affirmative Relief to Prevent Future Discrimination in Action Brought by California Department of Fair Employment and Housing*

The Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) today announced it has reached a settlement with OGC Investments, LLC (“OGCI”) after five women of Mexican ancestry filed complaints for employment discrimination based on national origin and age. The women worked as food preparers in the deli of the Oakville Grocery in Oakville, CA in Napa Valley.

Three of the women were long term employees who had worked at OGC for five, eight and eleven years. All five filed complaints with the DFEH alleging that OGCI managers discriminated against them when they terminated each of them over the phone through an interpreter because they were Hispanic, over 40 and did not speak English fluently. They also alleged that OGCI retained younger native English speaking employees who performed the same duties as they had performed while employed at OGC.

“Employers may not discriminate against employees by implementing an English-Only policy when native Spanish speaking employees can effectively perform the job,” said DFEH Director Kevin Kish. “Age also cannot be used as an excuse for terminating employees who are effectively performing their jobs.”

Under terms of the settlement, OGCI will pay \$149,000 in lost wages and emotional distress damages. The settlement also includes affirmative relief for a period of four years. OGCI will provide quarterly classroom or interactive training and education regarding California’s Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) including training and education on national origin discrimination and English-Only policies to its supervisors and Human Resources representatives. The company also is prohibited from implementing any employment policies or practices based on an individual’s accent unless the accent interferes materially with job performance or imposing an English fluency or English proficiency requirement unless such requirement is required for the effective performance of the position for which it is imposed. As part of the settlement, OGCI has admitted no wrongdoing.

OGC Investments LLC is a California corporation founded in 1881 and is headquartered in Oakville, California with stores in Healdsburg, California and Scottsdale, Arizona.

*DFEH is the state agency charged with enforcing California’s civil rights laws. The mission of DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations, and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit [www.dfeh.ca.gov](http://www.dfeh.ca.gov).*