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## Press Release

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### **Gallo's Mexican Restaurants and Taco King to Pay \$835,000 in Overtime and Damages Owed to 159 Employees**

JUNEAU, Alaska—The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development has secured an agreement from Gallo's Mexican Restaurants and Taco King, Inc. to pay more than \$835,000 in overtime and liquidated damages owed to 159 employees in Alaska. This represents one of the largest recoveries of overtime wages secured by the department's Wage and Hour Administration.

A recent investigation by the department found that Gallo's Mexican Restaurants and Taco King, with multiple locations in Anchorage and Fairbanks, violated the overtime provision of the Alaska Wage and Hour Act and failed to maintain accurate payroll records. Previous investigations into the businesses found they were in violation of Alaska's wage and hour laws and resulted in the collection of over \$50,000 in unpaid wages and damages.

"Wage violations are not uncommon in the restaurant industry where workers may not know their rights or are afraid to speak up," said Labor Commissioner Heidi Drygas. "This enforcement puts money back where it belongs – in the pockets of hardworking people and their families."

Increased collaboration between the U.S. Department of Labor and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development contributed to the success of this investigation. The partnership has enabled information and resource sharing between the agencies, allowing them to stand together to protect workers and responsible employers from the consequences of wage theft.

Alaska's wage and hour laws require the payment of at least the state minimum wage for all hours worked, and overtime pay for hours worked beyond eight in a day or 40 in a week for all covered, nonexempt employees. This applies to all workers in Alaska, regardless of how they are paid, whether by time, piece, commission or otherwise. Paycheck deductions for broken dishes, cash register shortages, or unpaid patron meals are illegal. Tips belong to the employee and may not be offset against minimum wage. Employers with questions about Alaska wage laws are encouraged to contact the Wage and Hour Administration. For more information, please visit <http://labor.alaska.gov/lss/whhome.htm>.

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