

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**  
**OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES**  
**Washington, DC**

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**Issue Date: 21 February 2023**

OALJ Case No: 2022-STA-00063  
OSHA Case No.: 5-2210-20-188

*In the Matter of:*

**MALIK RASHEED,**  
*Complainant,*

*v.*

**FUTUREWAY LOGISTICS LLC, ET AL.,**  
*Respondents.*

**DECISION AND ORDER APPROVING SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**  
**AND DISMISSING COMPLAINT**

The above-captioned case arises under the employee protection provisions of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act, 49 U.S.C. § 31105, and the corresponding regulations found at 29 C.F.R. Part 1978. Complainant is appealing a final determination letter issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration on May 16, 2022, dismissing a September 28, 2020 complaint alleging he was fired in retaliation for reporting he was too fatigued to operate a vehicle and refusing to violate the hours of service limitations. The Office of Administrative Law Judges docketed the above referenced case on May 20, 2022. A March 7, 2023 hearing was previously cancelled upon notice that the parties had reached a settlement.

On February 17, 2023, Complainant’s counsel filed *Unopposed Motion To Approve Settlement Agreement and Dismiss Proceeding With Prejudice* (“Motion”) and a separate *Confidential Settlement and Release Agreement* (“Settlement Agreement”) for my approval.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 29 C.F.R. § 1978.111(d)(1) states that at any time after the filing of objections to the Assistant Secretary’s findings and preliminary order, the case may be settled, and, if the case is before an administrative law judge, the settlement is contingent upon the approval of the administrative law judge. Any settlement approved by the administrative law judge becomes the final order of the Secretary. 29 C.F.R. § 1978.111(e).

The STAA and implementing regulations provide that proceedings may be terminated on the basis of a settlement if either the Secretary or the Administrative Law Judge (“ALJ”) approves the settlement. 49 U.S.C. § 31105(b)(2)(C); 29 C.F.R. § 1978.111(d)(2). Under the STAA, a settlement agreement cannot become effective until its terms have been reviewed and determined to be fair, adequate, and reasonable, and in the public interest. *Edmisten v. Ray Thomas Petroleum*, ARB No. 10-020, ALJ No. 2009-STA-00036 (ARB Dec. 16, 2009). Consistent with this required review, the regulations direct the parties to file a copy of the settlement “with the ALJ or the Administrative Review Board, United States Department of Labor, as the case may be.” 29 C.F.R. § 1978.111(d)(2).

Having reviewed the Settlement Agreement and its provisions, which include dismissal of the complaint, I find the terms, obligations, and conditions fair, adequate and reasonable, and in the public interest.<sup>2</sup> I also find that the settlement was not procured through duress.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the Motion is GRANTED and I approve the parties’ Settlement Agreement. To the extent not otherwise done so, the parties shall implement the terms of the approved settlement as specifically stated in the agreement. This Order shall have the same force and effect as one made after a full hearing on the merits.<sup>4</sup>

### **ORDER**

Accordingly, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that the *Confidential Settlement and Release Agreement* filed on February 17, 2023 is **APPROVED**, and thereby become the final order of the Secretary and may be enforced pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1978.113.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that, upon payment of the agreed consideration as set forth in the Settlement Agreement, the complaint is **DISMISSED with prejudice**, and that counsel for the Complainant is allowed to withdraw as counsel

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<sup>2</sup> I note that the agreement involves a waiver of “all claims, demands, grievances, lawsuits, causes of action and/or damages of any nature or source whatsoever.” (Settlement Agreement page 2). However, this approval applies only to the STAA complaint over which the Office of Administrative Law Judges has jurisdiction.

<sup>3</sup> Complainant and Respondent were represented by counsel.

<sup>4</sup> The parties have agreed to keep the specific terms of the agreement confidential, subject to applicable laws. To effectuate such confidentiality, I will have the settlement agreement sealed. However, notwithstanding the parties’ agreement, the parties’ submissions, including the settlement agreement, become part of the record of the case and are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552(a). If a FOIA request is made for the settlement agreement, the U.S. Department of Labor will have to respond and decide whether to exercise its discretion to claim any applicable exemption.

of record in this matter following completion of his professional duties necessary to implementing the Settlement on behalf of Complainant.

**SO ORDERED:**

**STEPHEN R. HENLEY**  
Chief Administrative Law Judge